

When a State turns on its Citizens

Institutionalized Violence and Political Culture



Lloyd Sachikonye

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When a **State** turns on its Citizens

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60 years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe

Lloyd Sachikonye



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For Miriam, my mother,
who experienced coercion during the 2008 election

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Of course, I alone am responsible for any shortcomings in this study.

Lloyd Sachikonye

February 2011

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Acronyms

ACPD	African Community Publishing and Development
ANC	African National Congress
APs	Assembly Points
BOG	British Observers Group
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
CZC	Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRCs	Democratic Resistance Committees
GAPWUZ	General Agricultural and Plantations Workers Union Zimbabwe
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ILO	International Labour Organization
JOC	Joint Operations Command
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change- Mutambara
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai
MPOI	Mass Public Opinion Institute
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDP	National Democratic Party
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSC	National Security Council
OM	Operation Murambatsvina
OSI	Open Society Initiative
OSISA	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
PF	Patriotic Front
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
PTUZ	Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe
RAU	Research and Advocacy Unit
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community

SPT	Solidarity Peace Trust
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UANC	United African National Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WOZA	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZFTU	Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions
ZHR NGO	Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum
ZINASU	Zimbabwe National Students Union
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZPP	Zimbabwe Peace Project
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police





Preface

In March 2010, Zimbabwean police prohibited two significant photographic exhibitions. The first intended to display photographs in Harare of gruesome political violence perpetrated during the presidential run-off election campaign of April-June 2008. The second was held in Bulawayo to portray the ferocious violence committed by a military brigade during the Gukurahundi era of 1982-87. (Gukurahundi is a Shona term that literally refers to the first rain of summer that washes away the chaff left from the previous season. But it has come to be colloquially used to refer to the civil war in Matabeleland in which up to 20,000 people lost their lives.) The police were reluctant to allow Zimbabwean citizens to go down memory lane to revisit the brutal violence and terror that has been part and parcel of Zimbabwe's political and electoral processes in recent decades. This was not unexpected. Despite their participation in repression against opposition and civil society activists, especially during the decade 1999-2009, state security as well as state-controlled institutions are uncomfortable when images of beatings, torture, and corpses are put on public display.

This study assesses the causes, patterns, dynamics, and consequences of political violence during the period of Zimbabwe's crisis from 2000 to 2008. It seeks to explore how the violence has affected the country's evolving political culture. The study deliberately focuses on how the violence has been institutionalized to the extent that it has been 'organized' by specific institutions. These include state-related institutions, political parties, militia, and war veteran groups. Observing that the political violence is not random but consciously planned and executed at particular conjunctures, the study presents evidence to show how the military, police, security agencies, ruling and opposition parties alike have engaged in this violence. It is also shown that civil society organizations (CSOs) have not been immune from the cancer of violence both as victims of it as well as participants in it. Indeed, the study argues that Zimbabwean politics are embedded in a tradition and practice of violence that began more than half a century ago.

The consequence of this state of affairs is a society traumatized by fear, withdrawal, and collective depression based on past memories of violence, intimidation and harassment.

Yet less than a generation ago, the notion was widespread that violence had

redeeming qualities for societies that waged liberation struggles, and that the independence so won was somehow superior to that obtained on a 'silver platter'. It was Frantz Fanon who observed that:

for the colonized people this violence... invests their characters with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upwards in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning... The mobilization of the masses, when it arises out of the war of liberation, introduces into each man's consciousness the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny and a collective history... (Fanon, 1967:73).

In the Zimbabwean experience, while violence was a decisive instrument in the attainment of independence, it was also a major divisive force afterwards. It has remained a cancer that corrodes the country's political culture and blocks its democratic advance. The study is therefore more sceptical about Fanonian claims that 'at the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force'. In the Zimbabwean case, violence has been institutionalised to build an authoritarian state that is contemptuous of citizen rights including expression of their preferences through the vote. However, at another level, we agree that some of the principal effects of violence are mental, emotional, psychological scars both temporary and permanent that Fanon observed and described in his book (Ibid.).

Beyond the assumption of power by new ruling elites, the use of violence in liberation struggles has yielded ambiguous results. In southern Africa, for instance, the civil wars that wracked Angola and Mozambique from the 1970s to the 1990s were ferocious by any standards. While external destabilization by certain powers was a major factor in the perpetuation of these wars, this did not exonerate collusion of local forces with the latter, nor the massive brutalities and fatalities experienced in those conflicts. Some analysts who have revisited liberation war-type violence have cautioned that:

violence is usually unjustified. It is a breach of peace, or potential peace in our case, which is a condition for a society based on mutual respect. Violence tends to dehumanize the other, especially in political violence where the victim is defined as the enemy... It is now undesirable to emphasize heroic acts of war where these feed into heroic actions... (Suttner, 2010).

This sober assessment of violence as an instrument of dehumanization is sadly absent in Zimbabwean discourse on the liberation struggle and in post-independence politics. On the contrary, it is not uncommon for the ZANU-PF

leadership to extol the 'virtues' of violence and its heritage of 'degrees in violence'. As another analyst has argued, 'violence breeds violence and victims of violence become violent themselves' and:

at independence, our society did little to rehabilitate itself from the habits of violence prevalent during the liberation war. We have assumed that violence is a tool that we can take up, use and drop at any time. History has proved that this is not so...' (Kaulem, 2004:81).

This study shows how dangerous the inculcation of values based on the use of political violence for electoral advantage and for the accumulation of power has been, especially during the period under review.

To reiterate, this study does not have the ambition to be comprehensive. It limits itself to the period between 2000 and 2008. This is the period during which Zimbabwe's political, economic, and social crisis deepened. With the exception of the Gukurahundi era of 1982-87, it was also a period that witnessed the most intense political violence since independence. A limitation of the study is the absence of a linkage between political violence and other types of violence in Zimbabwean society. Domestic violence is a significant form of violence and so is crime-related violence. The study does not explore how these different types of violence relate to each other and whether they feed on each other. A study that explores this dimension would be illuminating.

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of political violence through a review of its historical phases and changing dynamics and patterns. It argues that the foundations of violence as an instrument in political competition were laid more than half a century ago in nationalist inter-party conflicts. Resorting to violence became common in factional rivalries within and between liberation forces in the 1970s. The post-independence period witnessed qualitative and quantitative leaps in the institutionalization of violence, with state agencies acquiring advanced technology for use in repression. The chapter argues that continuities in impunity and repressive techniques from the colonial period compounded the magnitude and regularity of institutionalized violence.

In the second chapter, the material imperatives of political violence are spelt out. They explained the accent on violence organized by the then ruling ZANU-PF party in conjunction with a militia and war veterans, with the collusion of certain state agencies against the opposition parties. It was not an accident that violence reached

its peak during election campaigns. There was often a 'margin of terror', which induced fear amongst the electorate, and tipped election outcomes in favour of the incumbent regime. Land reform was another catalyst of widespread violence in 2000-2003. Many farm-workers and commercial farm owners were caught up in the violence, which served a dual purpose of land redistribution to small farmers, and accumulation of land, sometimes multiple farms, by the elite. It was also a time of concerted repression of opposition movement supporters. As the decade progressed, the military and state bureaucracy became increasingly confident as they enriched themselves through the state, and as they identified their interests more closely with those of the incumbent regime. In their arrogance they warned that they would not allow a leader without liberation credentials to assume the reins of power, even if he/she won at the polls.

That warning was implemented during the 2008 election. State agencies played an active, if not a leading, role in ensuring that the opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, would not win in the run-off election and assume office. The violence that shook the country in April-June 2008 was systemic as well as systematic. Chapter 3 explores how the violence was strategic rather than sporadic, relentless rather than fragmented. While this institutionalized violence succeeded in sowing widespread fear and trauma, it left a large residue of resentment, frustration, and thirst for retribution amongst the population. Some of that pent-up frustration found expression in autonomous actions by communities in 2009 and 2010 for restitution of their property confiscated or destroyed by supporters of ZANU-PF. Unless sensitively handled, the embers of injustice and quest for revenge could create combustible conditions for a future explosion.

Finally, Chapters 4 and 5 assess the broad effects of violence on Zimbabwe's political culture. While ZANU-PF and its allies – youth militia, war veterans and state agencies – have been sources of most violence, there has also been a resort to violence by the opposition and civil society organizations. These chapters observe that even if that violence occurs on a relatively limited scale, and some of it largely self-defensive, this is a worrying development. There remains a dangerous possibility that the values and practice of political violence of ZANU-PF could be reproduced in other parties and in civil society. Chapter 5 shows, in particular, that the wider effects of violence in Zimbabwe are still unfolding. They include fear and withdrawal, stress and depression, spawning a myriad of mental and psychological disorders whose prevalence and depth still need to be fathomed.





Chapter 1

Background, History and Patterns of Political Violence



Introduction

In March 2007, the world was shocked by the scenes of brutality seared into swollen faces and battered heads as well as broken limbs of Zimbabwean opposition politicians and civil society leaders. They had been extensively beaten and tortured by state security forces and denied medical treatment for several days. The gruesome

treatment that they received from the state was punishment for attempting to hold a public prayer meeting. Six months earlier, in September 2006, harrowing torture had been applied to trade unionists who were exercising their right to protest against the regime's economic policies. Even more shocking was the retributive violence, largely orchestrated by state security forces, against opposition and civil society activists in April-June 2008. State-organized violence against opponents of ZANU-PF has been a central instrument in the perpetuation of its tenure and hence its systematic deployment during election campaigns since independence. But violence as a method of political competition, and for seeking and maintaining power, has deep roots in Zimbabwean politics. The practice and culture of violence were established more than 50 years ago. By the time a split occurred in the nationalist movement in 1963 – the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) as a splinter party from the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) – violence was already frequently used in political contest.

Half a Century of Political Violence

To trace the roots of political violence to the period 1960-63 is not to provide any excuse for its subsequent use, or its refinement under both the Smith and Mugabe regimes. It is an attempt to understand *why* and *how* violence has been a method of choice of regimes in power to maintain their grip on power. It is also to explore why counter-violence has been a preferred option by groups or forces (such as nationalist/liberation movements and some opposition parties) aspiring to power. Clearly there were certain dividends from the deployment of violence. The colonial state itself was a major source of violence. Violence was a major prop for the institutions that the colonial state created (Interview with N.U., February 2010). It deployed this

violence against nationalist organizations such as the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). The growth of militant and mass nationalism in colonial Zimbabwe was a response to a shift to uncompromising white supremacy under the successive leaderships of Edgar Whitehead, Winston Field and Ian Smith. The eclipse in 1958 of the moderate Garfield Todd government which was sympathetic to African nationalism heralded a pronounced shift to this white extremism that was hostile to African nationalist aspirations.

Detentions of nationalist leaders and banning of their parties became common methods of the white minority regime to contain nationalism. Violence was deployed through beatings, use of dogs in controlling gatherings, forceful arrests and shootings. Nationalists mounted resistance to this violence. As one historian recalled:

party leaders ordered their members to mount resistance against provocative police operations. The response was solid and proved beyond any doubt that the leaders were far from being a coterie of malcontents with no base among the people... (Bhebe, 1989:74).

Marches and demonstrations against the colonial regime were common. So too were strikes and riots. Some of the strikes were quelled with ferocity. At Wankie, in 1954, miners were tear-gassed while pressing for better working conditions. In Harare, during a riot in October 1960, seven Africans were shot dead while 70 received gunshot wounds. Earlier in July 1960, Bulawayo was rocked by riots and protests against the colonial state. These were termed the *zhii* riots in which youth played a leading role. However, this violence as expressed through riots often slipped out of the control of nationalists, and degenerated into widespread lawlessness. Troops were deployed in the townships in 1960 and in the countryside to stem the spiralling violence (Ranger, 1995). The NDP itself was banned in 1961. And this was just the beginning of half a century of political violence.

Political Violence in the Nationalist Movement

An outstanding feature of African nationalism in Zimbabwe was not just its confrontation with white minority nationalism through violence. There was also a great deal of violence between the nationalist parties themselves. Instead of expending their energies and other resources against the white minority state, ZAPU and ZANU in 1963 and 1964 engaged in a bitter violent contest for the political high ground. Each of the two parties sought to position itself for power in negotiations with the British imperial state and the white minority state. The stakes were clearly high. This study will not attempt to delve into events and

factors surrounding the fissure in the nationalist movement in 1963. It was a fissure that resulted in the split of ZAPU with the splinter wing calling itself ZANU. Some analysts have explained the split in terms of the ethnic factor but the power dynamics should not be underestimated; for instance, prominent Shona politicians remained in the leadership of ZAPU despite the presumption that it was a predominantly Ndebele party.

Inter-party violence reared its ugly head for the first time in the clashes between ZAPU under Joshua Nkomo and ZANU led by Ndabaningi Sithole. It was a contest conducted with ferocity in both urban townships and rural areas. Interestingly, there has been considerable writing about this inter-party violence (Nyagumbo, 1980; Ellert, 1989; Sithole, 1999; Nkomo, 1999; Tekere, 2007). Most of the writing has been in the form of empirical accounts without analytical reflections on the precedents and consequences of that form of violence. Given the viciousness and wide reach of inter-party violence, questions should have been asked as to whether the violence was a manifestation of latent aggression built into the colonial system. In other words, *humiliation* and *belligerence* amongst the colonized was destructively used against fellow nationalists instead of directed at the colonial state and its agents. In addition, it could have been questioned whether and in what ways the colonial state itself abetted the inter-party clashes to its advantage.

Nevertheless, these accounts that exist are illuminating. Amongst nationalists, Maurice Nyagumbo spent the longest period in political detention experiencing violence in its various manifestations during the process. He wrote that some ZAPU leaders in 1963:

went to Mabvuku, Harare and Mufakose where they mobilised youth, who were all brought to Highfield and given the task of stoning the houses of those they called 'dissidents' who no longer wanted Nkomo's leadership. This started a black chapter of our history in this country. Our opponents, Nkomo and his followers, were dedicated to the elimination of every one of us and those who supported us... (Nyagumbo, 1980:179).

Nyagumbo added that throughout the year 1963-64 the destruction of houses and property and the molestation of ZANU members continued. He narrated how he was an object of the violence himself:

at my house in Highfield, I was awoken by pieces of asbestos falling on my bed from the roof. I then saw those thugs were trying to get into my room through the window but the whole roof had been torn by stones...(Ibid., 183).

Rural areas were not spared the violence. Nyagumbo's house and other property were burnt in 1964. In Murehwa, thugs rampaged through villages demanding money for 'umdala' (a reference to Nkomo) (Ibid.). It was alleged that those who could not afford the required money had their houses burnt down and property destroyed. Nyagumbo concludes his account of inter-party violence by narrating a horrendous ordeal experienced by one chief in the Rusape district:

Some thugs went to headman Nedewedzo's village, remaining on a hill opposite until late at night. When the old man had gone to sleep, these people went to the house and tied the only door with a piece of wire from outside and set the house alight. Although he struggled with the door and shouted for help, by the time the neighbours came the place had already burnt down and the old man was dead... (Ibid., 184).

Of course, Nyagumbo's account is partisan and attributed the blame for the inter-party violence to ZAPU's thugs. There was also violence committed by ZANU's thugs against ZAPU about which he was reticent. Even so, Nyagumbo acknowledges the prominent role played by ZANU youth leaders in inter-party violence. As he recounts: 'both Enos Chikowore and Nyamupingidza boasted that they could make it impossible for Chikerema and Nkomo to remain in Harare for one hour' (Ibid.). The two were key ZANU youth leaders who directed violence against ZAPU leaders and supporters.

Equally prominent in anti-ZAPU violence was Edgar Tekere who was active not only in Highfield but also in Gweru. In his autobiography, he recounted that:

...the Zanu Youth Wing went to Masvingo to mobilise support for the Party in that town. In effect, we were fighting a war with Zapu and, as Zanu was unable to operate in either Harare or Bulawayo, the Gweru structure was effectively fighting for the whole party. We would dispatch teams to the other cities, particularly at weekends, to fight battles. Zapu would go into hiding when they heard we were coming... (Tekere, 2007:54).

These recollections underscore the muscular and aggressive approach taken to mobilization and political competition by ZANU's leadership. In his own account of inter-party violence, Joshua Nkomo is more restrained but perhaps predictably lays the blame on ZANU. Blaming it for the split in the nationalist movement, he charged that:

Zanu was determined to make its mark by fair means or foul. Among my own supporters, there was real anger at the Zanu leadership's betrayal of national solidarity. On each side there was

violence against the other, leading in particular to a campaign of petrol bombing in the townships that caused real distress. The government was obviously delighted at this split among its enemies, and did its best to foster confusion (Nkomo, 2001:101).

While the hand of the colonial government could not be ruled out, the predominant responsibility for the inter-party violence lay with the two parties. Conspicuous by its absence was any effort by the leaderships of the two parties to dissuade and stop the violence amongst their members. In retrospect, this was a grave error of omission and ambivalence amongst such leaders as Joshua Nkomo, Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe. The culture and resurgence of inter-party violence in future would haunt them. As a perceptive study of this era of nationalism has argued, particular nationalist leaders and parties made decisions to accept the use of political violence to attain political control of township populations (Scarnecchia, 2008). Obtaining such control:

became an integral part of nationalist strategy in the 1960s as large sums of international financial support were resting on the claims of competing groups to greater grassroots support. Violence became the most 'efficient' short-term means of creating support even if its long-term effects were disastrous... (Ibid., 2).

Clearly, before UDI in 1965 and intensification of rule by a state of emergency, inter-party violence was a significant diversion of energies from the anti-colonial struggle to fratricidal infighting within the nationalist movement. However, the experience of that violence and trauma does not appear to have been explored in depth in most literature. It left, however, a permanent stamp on Zimbabwe's evolving political culture. More than 50 years later, the burning of houses and property of political opponents continues. Indeed, there has been intensification in inter-party violence in the form of torture, abductions, extra-judicial killings, eviction from property as well as use of food as a political weapon. The major *additional element* is the central role played by the state in the orchestrating of this violence. But this is to anticipate. Let us explore other forms and patterns of political violence prior to independence.

Ramifications of Violence in a Liberation War

We should distinguish between the different forms of violence executed from the 1960s onwards. In addition to inter-party violence, there was violence consciously aimed at colonial state institutions and personnel. Then there was guerrilla violence by soldiers who became known as 'freedom fighters' aimed at colonial regime

security forces but also at white civilians. Each of these types of violence had its own distinctive logic and objective. This will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 2, but here we will provide an outline of liberation war-related violence. The *first phase* of guerrilla warfare in the early 1960s mainly involved sabotage. Undertaken by nationalist groups known as *Zhanda*, the overall strategy of sabotage was to cause maximum disruption to the economy and sow fear amongst whites. Tactics employed by *Zhanda* militants included the use of petrol bombs and arson against state institutions, factories, shops, council halls, dip tanks and schools (Ellert, 1989). Other forms of sabotage were fence-cutting, telephone-wire cutting, destruction of white farm crops and livestock as well as murder (Ibid.). The *Zhanda* campaign proved effective but it might have made a greater impact on the regime if it had been backed by sustained guerrilla incursions. The regime was able to contain the situation through increased surveillance and repression in both urban and rural areas.

The *second phase* in guerrilla violence was heralded by the operations of nationalist guerrillas trained in China. In July 1964, a ZANU group known as the Crocodile Gang under the leadership of William Ndangana organized acts of sabotage and violence. Their operations culminated in the murder of a white farmer called P.J. Oberholzer in the Nyanyadzi district of Manicaland. Later, other farm-related attacks included the killing of J.H. Viljoen in the Chegutu district in Mashonaland West. In September 1964, a ZAPU guerrilla group attacked a ranch at Kezi in Matabeleland South.

These guerrilla skirmishes reached a climax in April 1966 near Chinhoyi in Mashonaland West when there was a prolonged clash between ZANU guerrillas and regime security forces. So fierce was the clash, which included aerial bombardment, that it later became known as the Battle of Chinhoyi. A major feature of these incursions and clashes was that nationalist guerrillas enjoyed considerable local support in rural areas (such as Nyanyadzi, Zvimba and Chegutu) in which they operated. In 1967 and 1968, there were even larger sustained clashes between ZAPU guerrillas and regime forces. A combined ZAPU-African National Congress (ANC) force inflicted significant casualties on regime forces. It is noteworthy that the leading veterans of what became known as the Wankie Campaign were Dumiso Dabengwa of ZAPU and Chris Hani of the ANC (Dabengwa, 1995; Smith and Tromp, 2009). However, like the earlier sabotage campaign of 1963-65, the regime successfully contained the guerrilla attacks.

However, with the *third phase* of guerrilla advances in 1972, the situation changed

significantly. The balance of strength, especially firepower as well as grassroots support, changed irretrievably from 1972 onwards. It is not our intention to provide a narrative account of the liberation war itself from 1972 to 1979. It is sufficient to state that it was a vicious war in which many combatants from guerrilla and regime forces were killed and injured but also in which thousands of civilians lost their lives, property and livelihoods.

How significant were the forms, dynamics and patterns of violence in this phase of the liberation war? Let us briefly consider the following types of violence:

- Colonial regime violence including torture and collective punishment,
- Guerrilla coercion and violence,
- Intra-liberation movement violence, and
- Militia violence and civilians caught up in crossfire.

Colonial Regime Forces' Violence

In seeking to contain the advances of guerrilla forces of ZANU (ZANLA) and ZAPU (ZIPRA), regime forces used massive violence, first against the guerrillas themselves and their collaborators (*mujiba* and *chimbwido*) as well as the local civilian population for morally or materially supporting the former. An early report by a church-affiliated organization provided details of colonial state brutality including torture, extra-judicial killings, public display of bodies of dead guerrillas to deter local support, removals of civilians to 'protected villages', and confiscation of their property such as livestock as 'collective punishment' for supporting guerrillas (CCJPZ and CIIR, 1975). The report estimated that between December 1972 and August 1976, the liberation war had claimed 2,408 lives. These were broken down into 1,185 guerrillas, 149 regime forces, 39 white civilians and 1,035 black civilians. Of the black civilians, 432 had been killed by regime forces and 603 by guerrillas (Ibid.). In addition, 69 Africans were sentenced by regime courts to death for liberation war-related activities. As the report further observed:



The statistics of death tell little of the suffering of ordinary people from all walks of life. Every aspect of life has been affected; whole communities have been uprooted and families are divided by separation or difference of political viewpoint. Fatherless families - black and white - and children who know only war and violence, young men's lives and futures disrupted - these are some of the consequences of the civil war that is being fought...(Ibid., 63).

One study quotes official figures, which state that between 1977 and 1980, guerrillas killed 2,751 civilians while the regime forces killed 3,360 black civilians (Caute, 1983:386). However, the latter figure does not include considerable numbers of civilians killed in regime forces' air raids in Mozambique and Zambia. In total, by the end of the war, more than 30,000 people had lost their lives, about 100,000 people injured and more than 750,000 people displaced from their homes into 'protected villages', while an equivalent number had been turned into refugees mostly in Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana (CSVR, 2009). Torture was extensively used by regime security forces to extract information about guerrillas; 'torture in the 1970s was more severe and psychologically bad' (Interview with S.T., February 2010). Rural youth were a major target of this form of violence. Severe beatings of youths in Mtoko (Mutoko), of women in Mrewa (Murehwa) and shootings of curfew breakers were reported in the above-mentioned dossier (CCJPZ and CIIR, 1975). Abductions, disappearances and extra-judicial executions of nationalists were also common in the 1970s with the most famous abductions being those of Ethan Dube, Machaya Philip Chimufombo, Edison Sithole and Miriam Mhlanga (in 1974-75).

Furthermore, a sinister form of campaign by regime forces involved the display of killed guerrillas in public places to 'win the hearts and minds' of the rural population. There was public display and disrespectful handling of mutilated bodies of guerrillas killed in action at a number of police stations. Similarly,



pictures of guerrillas killed in action were distributed in rural areas where fighting had taken place. These displays of the dead were part of a concerted psychological campaign to intimidate, demoralize as well as traumatize the African population.

Finally, regime forces used poison to kill and maim guerrillas. Contrary to rules of war, they used poisoned clothing to kill guerrillas. In 1977-78, a total of 67 confirmed deaths were reported by ZANLA, while up to 70 ZIPRA fighters died during the same period. One analyst has recounted how the use of poisoned clothing was carried out, inflicting considerable casualties on the guerrillas (Ellert, 1989:142). The Selous Scouts, a section of the regime forces, perfected the use of poisoning:

knowing that guerrillas depended upon civilians for the supply of clothing, food and other goods, the Selous Scouts set out to infiltrate supply networks and to poison the goods which passed through them. Various poisons were used, including a type of organophosphate known as

parathion which was impregnated into the fabric of clothing so that poisons would be absorbed through soft body tissue where prolonged contact could be achieved... After exposure to poison, the victim would experience symptoms which included bleeding from the nose and mouth and a rise in temperature. Thallium and a rat poison called warfarin were used in food and drink... (Quoted in Ranger et al., 2000:144).

Both ZANLA and ZIPRA forces were subjected to this chemical and biological warfare and a considerable number of guerrillas died. This sparked a hunt for 'witches' amongst the rural population resulting in a number of unjustified killings.

Guerrilla Coercion and Violence

There was also a great deal of violence exercised by guerrillas against collaborators of regime forces as well as against civilians amongst the African rural population. The violence was as gruesome and brutal as that used by regime forces. First, it was directed at collaborators such as 'informers' who were widely used by the regime and personnel such as police, guard forces, councillors and chiefs and other personnel of local state institutions. One study has explored guerrilla methods of coercion at length (Kriger, 1992). Local people's accounts confirmed government records that chiefs and headmen were killed by guerrillas; that rural African elite kept careful tabs on the fate of their colleagues; and that guerrillas did not deny that their victims were 'enemies' who deserved their fate. As it was observed:

Coercion was more widely used, threats were more likely enforced, and the categories of people who were potential targets expanded. All Africans directly or indirectly involved in European institutions might become victims of guerrilla coercion if they failed to respond to non-violent appeals to cooperate with the guerrillas... (Ibid., 104).

To the old list of targets (church leaders, chiefs and headmen, government agricultural advisors Africans who belonged to other parties, informers) were added: farm-workers on white commercial farms, better-off farmers who engaged in marketing surpluses, elected or nominated councillors and appointed council staff, teachers and all African government employees.

The major institution that evolved during this period was the *pungwe*. Often an all-night meeting, it played a dual role of political mobilization and raising 'morale' but also of inflicting public trials, beatings and killings to those identified as 'enemies', 'informers' or 'sell-outs'. Attendance at the *pungwe* was often compulsory. If people were absent, or failed to provide resources such as food

to guerrillas or were alleged to be 'sell-outs'; they were liable to be beaten with huge poles, sticks or any available equipment (Ibid.). In fact, failure to conform to guerrilla instructions by one could result in death, usually with the same instruments with which guerrillas beat people. It was pointed out that from the vantage point of parents and the rural elite, there were many cases in which guerrillas killed innocent people as 'sell-outs' without investigation (Ibid.). Not only were alleged sell-outs identified in front of gatherings during the *pungwes* but their family members were forced to beat them as a deterrent to others (Interview with D.A., January 2010). Guerrillas' methods of coercion caused fear and trauma amongst the victims but also the wider rural population. In particular, civilians found themselves caught between the brutality and coercion of the warring sides, respectively the regime forces and guerrillas.

Violence in the Liberation Movements

We have seen that not only did guerrillas experience violence at the hands of regime forces but they also inflicted coercive and retributive violence against colonial state personnel, collaborators and other targets including farm-workers and chiefs. There was also considerable violence between the guerrillas themselves. The most widely reported violence was that perpetrated during the Thomas Nhari and Badza rebellion in ZANU in 1975, and subsequent executions of participants in that rebellion, and detentions of 'dissidents' from Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) in 1978. The violence that engulfed ZANU in 1975 claimed the lives of some party leaders including the National Chairman, Hebert Chitepo.

For purposes of assessment, we will highlight only the principal elements and outcomes of that violence. The immediate cause of the bloody infighting in ZANU was grievances by a group of guerrillas led by Badza and Nhari. Directed at the top hierarchy of the ZANU Military Command, the grievances centred on:

- shortage of essential commodities such as food, clothing and shoes and war materials at the war front;
- alleged wholesale corruption in the Military Command which manifested itself in tribalism, preferential treatment and misappropriation of funds intended for the prosecution of the war;
- irregular promotions by the Military Command;
- policy of sending people to the Front as a form of punishment; and
- exploitation of girl cadres as house-maids and concubines by leaders.

(Report of the Special International Commission on the Assassination of Herbert

Wiltshire Chitepo, 1976:15-16; Chung, 2006). Those who carried out the rebellion unleashed considerable violence after failing to get their grievances addressed by the ZANU leadership. Significantly, Thomas Nhari pointed out that their grievances were not directed at the Dare, the party's policy organ but at the Military High Command particularly at Josiah Tongogara (Chief of Defence) and Cloetus Chigowe (Chief of Security).

The response to the rebellion was vicious. As the Commission on Chitepo's murder explained:

Those rebels who appeared before the Chimurenga General Council received death sentences. Convicted persons were said to have been sentenced to 'go home', a euphemistic term meaning sentenced to die. Such persons were later found in mass graves at Chifombo and its environments... When these bodies were exhumed after Chitepo's death, their hands and/or feet were tied... (Ibid., 27).

A member of the Military High Command was quoted as having stated that whoever was found 'zig-zagging' and was a 'stumbling-block' in ZANU should suffer at the hands of the party. It was added that the party had taken a 'vow' in this direction which was permanent and irrevocable and so the executions at Chifombo were in keeping with the party's vow (Ibid.).

In sum, the blood-letting in ZANU during 1974 and 1975 was fierce. It was violence which marked a clear failure by the leadership to settle internal differences and grievances through dialogue. Instead authoritarian and commandist methods were employed leaving a trail of bitterness and suspicion. In one assessment of the rebellion episode, it was observed that:

Some ZANU leaders, particularly Chitepo (ZANU Chairman) and John Mataure (ZANU Political Commissar), believed that they should listen to the young officers. Tongogara, on the other hand, who was the focus of the young officers' criticism, believed that giving an audience to these officers was tantamount to treason and encouragement of rebellion. It was a period of confusion for members of ZANU and ZANLA faced with the dilemma of which group to believe: the established military leadership under Tongogara, or the young officers complaining of mismanagement, corruption and neglect (Chung, 2006:91).

The legacy of violence within the liberation movement was pervasive. As reflected in a song '*ZANU ndeyeropa*' (translated as 'ZANU has a history of blood'), violence was ingrained into the political culture of ZANU. Some of the spill-over of this

culture was reflected in such *noms de guerre* as 'Teurai Ropa' (Spill Blood), amongst others, that Joice Mujuru (later Vice-President in independent Zimbabwe) used. Although there were other rebellions and conspiracies in 1977 and 1978 within ZANU leadership, they did not culminate in such blood-letting as in 1974-75. However, it was still significant that the violence and methods of containment were considerable. In one incident it was recalled that there was an attempted 'coup':

We established that a number of leaders were involved... They had infiltrated our army, especially our general staff and detachment commanders, and those who were in daily contact with the troops and now had influence deep into the military. They were, coincidentally, the same people who had been arrested in Zambia following the death of Chitepo...' (Tekere, 2007:97).

After being apprehended, the alleged plotters were confined to a dug-out gaol called 'chikariboso'. Tekere recalls:

A day when Mugabe toured the prison, and the prisoners were presented to us. Rugare Gumbo approached, obviously having been thoroughly beaten. His face was all swollen. He said to Mugabe, 'Chef, look how badly I was beaten by the guards, is this the right thing to do?' Mugabe looked straight at him and said, 'Did you expect any better treatment?' and passed on... (Tekere, 2007:101).

It would be misleading to give the impression that dissension and violence during the liberation struggle was confined to ZANU. ZAPU also experienced internal conflict and violence in its ranks but much earlier, in 1970-71. Some of the activities and decisions by the leadership, especially by the Acting President, James Chikerema, caused division within the party (Dabengwa, 1995; Sibanda, 2005). The climax of the conflict was a mutiny by a group of cadres (also known as the March 11th Movement) under Walter Mthimukulu who arrested political leaders like J.Z. Moyo and George Silundika but failed to apprehend Chikerema himself. When the mutiny spread to other combatants in ZAPU camps in Zambia, the Zambian Government intervened and succeeded in quelling it. Most of the grievances of the mutineers related to remoteness of the leadership, lack of internal democracy, and inadequate supplies for fighters (Sibanda, 2005). However, the amount of violence used against mutineers was on a relatively lower scale than that used in ZANU.

In sum, it would appear that the practice of meting out violence to opponents in the liberation movement was widespread. Due process of law and justice did not exist. There was no tradition of reasoned debate and dialogue to resolve organizational and ideological issues. For instance, Marxist-inclined cadres who had formed ZIPA in 1976 were quickly marginalized, ostracized and detained till

the end of the liberation war in 1979. Although, after independence, there was less overt violence used against each other by ZANU leaders, the culture of conspiracy, mistrust and factionalism survived and thrived. This contributed to considerable fear and insecurity; for instance, only in rare instances later would there be challenges from within party ranks to Mugabe's position as ZANU-PF's leader. More generally, with the absorption of thousands of cadres into the police, army and intelligence forces, the culture of violence inculcated and experienced during the liberation war would find expression in distinctive forms of state-organized violence against opponents or, more broadly speaking, against the opposition.

Other Forms of Violence

Party-linked Militia

There were other forces and operations that compounded political violence before and after 1980. First, with the Internal Settlement of 1978 and formation of a coalition government shortly thereafter, each of the parties to the settlement recruited some militia. Ndabaningi Sithole was one of the signatories to the Settlement and he recruited a fighting force from Zimbabwean guerrillas trained in Uganda (Ellert, 1989). However, once back inside the country, this force was entirely dependent on regime logistical and other forms of material support. What is of great significance is that the Sithole militia was deployed against ZANLA forces. In one of the rural areas:

They terrorised villagers who refused to help them find local guerrilla units. Killings, hut burnings and sexual assaults upon women followed... (Ibid., 182).

It suffices that the proliferation of party-linked militia during 1978-79 exacerbated conditions of violence and lawlessness. Noteworthy developments during this phase were:

- Financing of the militia under Operation Favour of the coalition government,
- Creation of Pfumo reVanhu (Spear of the People) as an auxiliary force linked to Abel Muzorewa, one of the coalition leaders,
- Creation of an Auxiliary Force based on District Assistants by the Ministry of Internal Affairs for use by Jeremiah Chirau, one of the coalition leaders.

In the wake of Muzorewa's election win in April 1979, action was taken against the militia linked to Sithole because 'it was exacting vengeance on villagers whom they accused of having voted for Muzorewa' (Ibid.). In one incident in 1979, about 200 members of the Sithole militia were massacred. The months leading to the signing of the Lancaster House agreement and ceasefire in December 1979 were

marked by steadily declining morale within the Security Force Auxiliaries (SFAs) who now spent most of their time huddled in base camps (Ibid.). Soon after independence, an estimated 20,000 SFAs and 4,000 Guard Force members were disbanded. Although little has been written about these militia and SFAs, they should not be ignored. Through their exactions and brutality, they contributed to the spread of violence during the last two years of the liberation war. They were an example of what a desperate state could resort to in trying to stem the tide against it.

ZANLA-ZIPRA clashes

Although ZANU and ZAPU formed the Patriotic Front (PF) in 1976 as an umbrella for diplomatic and negotiating activities, they continued to operate as distinct entities including fighting as separate armies. During the election contest in 1980, the two parties campaigned separately. After a ceasefire in 1979, the fighters from ZANLA and ZIPRA were housed in Assembly Points (APs) that were located in different parts of the country. In 1980, camps housing guerrilla fighters from both armies were set up side by side on the outskirts of Bulawayo and Harare. In his account, Nkomo recalled that:

The first fighting occurred in Bulawayo early in November 1980. Zanu organized a party rally at White City stadium in the western suburbs. The speakers, including several Zanu ministers, insulted Zapu, insulted me as its leader, and said that all minority parties should be 'crushed'. Immediately afterwards, rifle shots were fired into the Zipra camp in Entumbane nearby. Zipra fired back (Nkomo, 2001:189).

Other clashes followed in February 1981, at Ntabazinduna near Bulawayo, at Connemara near Gweru, and in Chitungwiza near Harare, with a second clash at Entumbane. The casualties suffered in those clashes were not small. The November 1980 clash in Entumbane left 55 people dead, 550 people injured, and 2,000 homes damaged, while the February 1981 clash left about 197 killed and 1,600 homes damaged (Kriger, 2003:79). It was significant that the formerly Rhodesian army and air force had intervened on the government and ZANLA side escalating ZIPRA's suspicions and lending momentum to a wider ZIPRA resistance to ZANU-PF (Ibid.).

There is little doubt that aggressive and inflammatory rhetoric by some politicians ignited the clashes between the two liberation armies (Nkomo, 2001). This was compounded by an atmosphere of tension and insecurity in a context of demobilization, which affected ZIPRA more significantly and disproportionately. The tension and the clashes fuelled alienation and desertions and ultimately led

to the start of the dissident conflict in Matabeleland soon after. These developments resulted in the collapse of the government of national unity following the sacking of Nkomo and senior ZAPU leaders from government in 1982.

Significance of the Gukurahundi Violence

The violence that engulfed Matabeleland North and South as well as parts of Midlands from 1982 to 1987 consisted of 'dissident' violence and regime violence to stamp out the former. The dissidents had political and material grievances against the state but they were a numerically small force. It was estimated that there were probably no more than 500 dissident fighters at the height of the conflict. However, the Zimbabwe state viewed the dissidents as a major political threat from PF ZAPU (to which most dissidents claimed loyalty despite being disowned) as well as a source of destabilization because the apartheid regime sought to fan the conflict. Since there exist well-researched accounts of the Gukurahundi violence, we will not attempt to rehearse the detail here (CCJPZ and LRF, 1997; Ranger et al. 2000; Werbner, 1995). According to interviews with former dissidents and former ZIPRA guerrillas, the post-independence insurgency was a result of distrust within, and repression by, the newly formed Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) (Ranger et al., 2000).

The immediate context of the 'dissident' conflict was a discovery of vast quantities of arms on properties owned by a ZAPU company called Nitram, and ZIPRA Assembly Points (APs), and used this as grounds for confiscating the properties and the sacking of Joshua Nkomo and other ZAPU ministers from government in 1982. There followed a purge aimed at 'dissident sympathisers' as well as widespread violence in the ZNA; former ZIPRA combatants alleged that in several battalions they were segregated, disarmed and some of them killed (Ibid.).

Between 10,000 and 20,000 people were estimated to have been killed in this violence that was largely unleashed by the Fifth Brigade in early 1983. It was the biggest peace-time pogrom that the country has ever experienced in its history:

The deployment of the Fifth Brigade introduced terror and hardship on a scale civilians had known neither in the mounting insecurity of the 1980s nor at the height of the guerrilla war. The Fifth Brigade's exercise of violence was concentrated within a relatively short period - just under a year - and was perceived as unique. It overtly justified its violence in political and tribal terms. It not only systematically attacked Zapu and other community leaders but it also attacked civilians at large, civil servants, and even ZNA units and police. The death toll was high (Ibid., 217).

The excesses of the Fifth Brigade are legendary. The Brigade was trained by North Korean instructors and it was more highly politicized than professional in its conduct. Predominantly Shona in its composition, the Brigade was viewed in Matabeleland as anti-Ndebele, and not simply anti-dissident. Its operations amplified a political and ethnic interpretation of violence: the Brigade used an overtly tribal and political discourse, and its all-encompassing violence could not be explained as militarily motivated entirely (Ibid.). The Brigade's arrival in the area was characterized by a spate of killings including of ZAPU leaders identified at public meetings, through interrogations or from lists. The *pungwe* was utilized to mobilize people to meetings at which ZAPU and its leaders as well as dissidents were denounced in vitriolic terms. Those who attended the *pungwes* were required to sing ZANU-PF songs and chant the party's slogans. Public floggings of suspected ZAPU officials usually followed. There was a general pattern of forced singing, sloganeering and dancing, often accompanied by grotesque forms of violence as well as humiliations. For instance, 'old men and women whose dancing did not appeal to soldiers, or who could not sing Shona songs, were forced to dance for hours as they were beaten, or were held up for ridicule and special punishment' (Ibid., 222).

We can see that the Fifth Brigade transformed a ZANU method of mobilization, the *pungwe*, into a post-independence instrument of meting out arbitrary punishment to those who were perceived as enemies of the party and the state. In essence, the *pungwe* was employed to generate fear and trauma in affected communities. The violence in general, and the raping of women, in particular, was humiliating and dehumanizing. It was a scale of violence larger than experienced during the liberation struggle in that part of the country. One resident of Matabeleland North recalled that 'people were beaten and tortured on a large scale; some were forced to climb trees like baboons and some pregnant women bayoneted' (Interview with P.S., March 2010). More significantly, this was state-organized violence in that it was an apparatus of the state that was executing it.

For instance, it was observed that the Gukurahundi violence and terror brought back memories of the most brutal methods used by the Rhodesian forces, but imposed on the victims even more ruthlessly and far more devastatingly throughout Matabeleland (Werbner, 1995). In one community that was intensely studied in Matabeleland by an anthropologist, the level of devastation went deep:

It is significant that the intent of the attack was perceived not simply as settling old scores - the Shona soldiers took loot from them calling it 'the cattle stolen from our forefathers by you ' but

also in terms of a moral renewal, the purification of the country from 'rubbish', Gukurahundi was perceived to be 'evil without humanity'. The Gukurahundi of nationalism gave way to its monstrous twin of quasi-nationalism (Ibid., 198).

The killings, disappearances and displacement that were perpetrated under Gukurahundi have not been formally acknowledged by the Zimbabwe state and its leadership. The consequences of the violence were felt far and wide within Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. As intended, fear, stress and trauma left the society in those provinces in a state of shock, as we observe in Chapter 5. There has been no accounting by those who sanctioned and carried out the violence. The victims included children who lost parents in the conflict and have had difficulty in obtaining identity papers. Their entitlement to citizenship is affected as a consequence. The victims have had no access to justice and restitution. Gukurahundi therefore remains a dark chapter of post-independence violence whose perpetrators have not been called to justice.

Election-related Violence

In view of the history of muscular methods used in political contests from the 1960s, it should unfortunately come as no surprise that most elections conducted in post-independence Zimbabwe have been accompanied by violence. Some of it has been typical inter-party violence using basic technology such as stones, sticks and crude petrol bombs. But some of it has been state-organized and sophisticated violence orchestrated by the ruling party taking advantage of its levers of power.



In this section, we explore why elections are a crucial battleground in which violence and other methods, such as rigging, are employed against opponents. The major motivating factor in the deployment of violence and rigging is the grabbing and retention of power by hook or by crook. It reflects an indirect admission that a ruling party would have lost popular support, hence the resort to terror and violence to compel voters to vote for it. In some instances, this strategy has succeeded but in others it has failed. For instance, the Gukurahundi violence did not force Ndebele voters to support ZANU-PF in the 1985 election. ZAPU under Nkomo maintained its seats in the two Matabeleland provinces.

It is striking that while the first election that established Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 experienced considerable violence, the 2008 election was emblematic of the violence deployed to influence the outcome of the presidential run-off election. Perhaps, a more systematic assessment of political violence as a tool to extract support is that by Kriger who studied its deployment by ZANU-PF in the election campaigns between 1980 and 2000 (Kriger, 2005). The evidence that she marshals is so weighty that it is astonishing how political analysts (inside and outside Zimbabwe with a few exceptions) have underplayed the use of coercion at election time by ZANU-PF. The exceptions are a few studies that highlighted the predilection of ZANU-PF for violence in the 1985, 1990 and 1995 elections (Carver, 1989; Moyo, 1992; Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000). Even though it was on a reduced scale, the strategy of violence during election campaign periods was consistently used by ZANU-PF between 1985 and 1995. What changes from 2000 onwards are the scale, intensity and militarization of the violence.

In the 1980 campaign, ZANU-PF drew on its combatants who had not yet been de-militarized (i.e. those who had not yet entered Assembly Points) to mobilize rural support in the independence elections. Some observers pointed to the coercive methods that the party used at that stage:

The most frequent and brutal acts of intimidation took place in ZANLA-dominated areas. Methods against voters extended from brutal 'disciplining murders' as examples of the fate awaiting those who failed to conform, to generalized threats of retribution or a continuance or resumption of the war if ZANU failed to win the election; to psychological pressures like name-taking and claims to the possession of machines which would reveal how individuals had voted; and to the physical interdiction of attendance at meetings (Report by BOG, 1980:12).

Although he was an interested party being one of the major contestants, Joshua Nkomo made strong allegations against ZANU's violent conduct during the 1980 campaign. Intimidation based on overt and covert threats was rampant in those regions in which ZANU-PF guerrillas had been active (Nkomo, 2001).

Intimidation and violence in the 1985 election assumed the form of retribution against opposition parties that had contested against ZANU. This campaign included physical violence and property destruction against opposition supporters of ZAPU and United African National Congress (UANC). Robert Mugabe was quoted then of advising his ZANU supporters to 'go and uproot the weeds from your garden' and to 'take the rotten pumpkins from your patch'. On a much-

reduced scale, campaign violence in 1990 was directed at the opposition Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) while in 1995, it was directed at Forum, ZUM and ZANU Ndonga parties. Comparing opposition parties to 'puppies' and ZANU to an 'elephant', Mugabe was quoted as saying that 'the puppies could bark as long as they wanted provided they are far away. But the elephant would trample them if they got too near for comfort'. Thus violence has been a tool of choice if and when opposition parties threaten to erode the ruling party's support base. This is what became quite clear during the 2000 election campaign when state-directed violence was unleashed systematically on a large scale. The greater the opposition threat or victory, the more massive the scale of ZANU-PF violent backlash, as the 2000, 2002 and 2008 elections showed.

With the exception of the 1990 and 1995 elections, the period in which ZANU-PF was at the height of its popularity, a distinctive pattern existed of pre-election intimidation and violence and post-election witch-hunting. The ruling party took advantage of its control of state media (radio and television as well as publicly-owned newspapers) and other state infrastructures and resources (use of public buildings like schools, council halls, government vehicles and fuel) to tip the electoral balance in its favour. In a more calculated fashion, state institutions such as the police were used to harass or arrest opposition party candidates and supporters, or to ignore such cases of violence as the latter would bring to them. Thus state institutions conducted acts of commission (harassment and arrests) and omission (refusal to prosecute in cases brought to them by opposition parties). This became particularly pronounced in the 2000, 2002 and 2008 elections.

As we observed above, post-election violence has been a major feature of post-independence contests. The winning party does more than celebrate its deserved or ill-deserved victory. Demonstrating its lack of magnanimity, it has often exacted retribution on those voters and candidates who opposed it during the election. This involved public denunciations and harassment, destruction of property and eviction from housing or neighbourhood (Sithole, 1986; ZHR NGO Forum, various reports). In those instances in which an opposition party contested an election outcome in court, the ruling party deployed its supporters to intimidate candidates and witnesses. Thus the opposition candidate often experiences a dual ordeal. The candidate faces harassment and punitive action whether he or she wins or loses. This is a clear travesty of the electoral and democratic process. Leaders of the ruling party have not denounced post-election violence. In fact, as the above

quotations suggest, the leaders have actively encouraged their supporters to hound opposition party candidates.

There exists a considerable body of literature on election-related violence post-independence, and a clear shift in patterns is discernible (Sithole, 1986; Moyo, 1992; Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000). As we have already observed, prior to 2000 the scale of election-related violence was not significant. This reflected the relative weakness of the opposition parties. However, the quantitative and qualitative growth of the opposition after 1999 posed a significant threat to ZANU-PF, which then responded by scaling up the levels of violence and rigging. Most international and local election reports contain evidence on the significant trend from 2000 onwards (Commonwealth, 2000; European Union, 2000; NDI, 2000; ZESN, 2002). This slide into authoritarian violence and election rigging was the immediate context of Zimbabwe's political crisis and isolation beginning in 2000. We return to this theme in Chapter 3 when we explore in greater detail how state and party violence was deployed to thwart opposition victory in the 2008 election.

Institutionalized Violence

There is both a qualitative and quantitative difference in the scale of political violence between the periods before and after independence, as we have already seen above. The forms and sophistication of the technology used in that violence change significantly after 1980. There is a qualitative leap when state institutions such as Fifth Brigade and Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) are systematically deployed to repress dissent and weaken opposition parties (successively ZAPU in the 1980s and MDC in the 2000s). A new development is the blatant use of public resources during election campaigns by ZANU-PF, contrary to the provisions of the Electoral Act and the constitution. There is a steady drift towards the exploitation of state institutions such as the police for partisan purposes during elections and in other forms of contest between the ruling and opposition parties. By 2000, the scale of partisanship becomes even more pronounced. Murders, injury and intimidation of opposition members are ignored by state institutions like the police and CIO. In fact, in some instances, agents of these institutions are implicated in torture and murder of opposition organizers and supporters. Unfortunately, these forces are protected by formal or informal impunity. Thus, those institutions charged with protecting the law and dispensing justice have abdicated their responsibility. This explains the breakdown in the rule of law particularly from 2000. More cynically, the state itself created other institutions

trained in the administration of political intimidation and violence. These were the militia whose recruiting ground was trainees from national service (Border Gezi) training camps as well as war veterans. Drawn predominantly from youths in their teens, national service camps imparted political indoctrination that extolled the pre-eminence of ZANU-PF in the liberation struggle and government. The indoctrination also painted opposition parties as 'sell-outs' and 'Western puppets'. Having stripped them of their legitimacy and humanity as well as rights, the opposition was seen as 'fair game'; at election time its members were hounded, beaten, tortured and killed by this militia. Significantly, this militia worked closely with both the ruling party and state institutions such as the police and army. The same applied to war veterans. In addition, there was a conscious policy of government to give first preference of recruitment to graduates of these militia camps, and war veterans.

In the decade 2000 to 2010, the scale of technology-use in political campaigns had grown considerably in sophistication and quantity. It was a far cry from the stone-throwing of the 1960s. Nationalist politicians now commanded a huge army, a large police force, and intelligence forces as well as a massive arsenal of weapons.

Table 1: Cases of gross human rights violations – reported to Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001-2008

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Abductions</i>	116	223	52	62	18	11	19	137
<i>Arrest/Detention</i>	670	274	627	389	1286	2611	2766	922
<i>Disappearance</i>	0	28	4	0	0	0	0	19
<i>Murder</i>	34	61	10	3	4	2	3	107
<i>Political discrimination</i>	194	388	450	514	476	288	980	2987
<i>Torture</i>	903	1172	497	389	136	366	603	723

Source: CSV, 2009:12

Part of these resources was now directed at undercutting and thwarting opposition and civil society forces. Torture on a significant scale became possible through use of various instruments and techniques: use of electric equipment to inflict severe pain, truncheons, rubber equipment to use in *falanga* beatings; riot gear and tear gas amongst other technology. Sophisticated technology was used to

intercept mail, phone and Internet traffic of opposition and civil society organizations. As if this were not sufficient, significant numbers of militia were created out of 'Border Gezi' graduates. In sum, the post-independence state did not make an effort to pre-empt or contain political violence. It was a participant in that violence directly or indirectly. This is not uncommon in an authoritarian state. In such a situation, the state turns against the interests of citizens and denies them freedom to exercise political rights. The consequences for Zimbabwean society of embedding political violence within state institutions and transforming them into partisan institutions have been enormous, and will be felt for a long time.

Other Examples of State Repression

External Military Intervention

Zimbabwe's major military interventions after independence were in Mozambique in the 1980s, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in the 1990s. The first was largely in self-defence against the Renamo movement under Alfonso Dhlakama fighting the Frelimo government. Renamo posed a threat to Zimbabwe's communications lines especially the rail link to Beira port. The second was an ambitious attempt to shore up an ally, Laurent Kabila in the DRC in 1998. Our interest here is not so much the politics and strategies of intervention as their long-lasting effects on the military in terms of psychology, exposure to new methods of repression such as torture and techniques of brutality. There have been few, if any, studies of how these interventions affected the psychology, esteem and other experiences of Zimbabwean forces. In both interventions, there were brutal clashes including massacres. The forces would not have been immune to the impact of these experiences (Campbell, 2003; UN, 2003).

It is significant that the first major intervention of the military in policing operations in Zimbabwe was during the food riots of 1998. This was also the year of its intervention in the DRC. Particularly noteworthy in its policing to support the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), the military used unprecedented methods of brutality including shootings of protesters. Thereafter, the army has been implicated in violence during land invasions in 2000-03 and in the intimidation of voters, and notably in the 2008 run off presidential election. The orientation and ambition of the leadership of the defence forces was also revealed in its publicly stated position that it would not honour or recognize the election of a leader who did not have liberation war credentials.

The growth in the ambitions – political and material – of the defence establishment was a spin-off of its successes in the Mozambican and DRC campaigns. While the campaigns bled the national resources – for instance the DRC campaign cost US\$1m a day in 1998-99 – it nevertheless provided opportunities for personal accumulation of wealth by senior military personnel. While some of the accumulation was legal, much of it was illicit. Enrichment through mining and other forms of trade was accompanied by illicit activities such as poaching. The longer-term effects of the interventions included adoption of repressive techniques that began to be used frequently against civilians who sought to protest and march against regime policies. The military viewed itself more consciously as part of the state establishment as well as part of a political hierarchy whose major qualification to rule was participation in the liberation struggle. The military was clearly an interested party in the fortunes of the then ruling ZANU-PF.

One strand of critique posits an ideological dimension to the intervention. As it was argued:

Zimbabwean leaders of the ruling party searched for circumstances where Zimbabwean males could demonstrate that they were 'real men'. The deployment provided an opportunity for the political leaders to demonstrate the military prowess of 'freedom fighters' and 'liberators' (Campbell, 2003:18).

This critique added that the Zimbabwean government was drawn into a web of militarism and primitive accumulation through its deployment of troops, and this involvement had a severe impact on the politics and economics of the country. For instance, inside Zimbabwe itself, the militia-type operations of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association were co-ordinated with those of the *Interahamwe*, the Congolese capitalists and Zimbabwean military and capitalists (Ibid.). Finally, the critique linked the intervention in the DRC with what was termed an oppressive brand of masculinity that inspired land invasions, violence, virginity tests, aggressive homophobia, and denial of citizenship to some women.

Repression of Food Riots

The food riots of 1998 were put down with unprecedented ferocity. About eight people were shot dead and thousands injured while others had their property destroyed.



It marked the first time that the police subcontracted some of their policing functions to the military. The riots caused the first mass violations of human rights since the end of the Matabeleland conflict in 1987. The food riots were a culmination of a season of protests by restive sections of society especially workers, students, informal economy operators, the poor and the unemployed. Scarcity of food as well as high prices triggered a series of protests in the major cities. Strikes had become more frequent, culminating in the first post-independence General Strike in December 1997. A series of protest marches by war veterans raised tensions forcing the government to lose its nerve and cough up pay-outs of gratuities and pensions that it had not budgeted for. This caused a run on the Zimbabwe dollar resulting in its depreciation in a significant way.

It was thus, in this immediate context of growing popular protests and economic crisis, that military intervention in domestic affairs occurred. In a deeper sense, this was its first incursion into political containment of discontent. The professionalism of the military gave way to partisanship. Protests were viewed as basically anti-government and therefore subversive. This partly explains the unprecedented ferocity with which protests such as food riots were suppressed. In sum, the ZNA did not show restraint in dealing with civilians, and the widespread torture and assaults reported, and confirmed in court cases, indicated that the army should not be deployed in such situations without very strong grounds (Ibid.) This pattern that began in 1998 intensified in the period 2000 to 2002.

Repression of Workers and Students

Any assessment of political violence in post-independence Zimbabwe would be incomplete without reference to the repression of student and worker organizations as we show in more detail in Chapter 4. They have been the object of the systematic surveillance and violence of state organizations or state-linked vigilante groups. Precisely because these organizations have been the most consistent and vocal critics of the Mugabe regime, they have been targets of repression, especially detentions, beatings, torture and even killings since the mid-1990s. Elsewhere we have explored how labour unions struggled tenaciously for democratic space in the 1990s (Sachikonye, 1993; 2001; Tengende, 1994).

The material basis of the opposition of workers and students related to economic mismanagement, corruption and deteriorating conditions in public services especially health and education in the late 1990s. Regular strikes at workplaces

and at universities were symptoms of an underlying crisis. The Mugabe regime felt threatened by the upsurge of popular protests heralded by these two strategic social groups. Some of the measures applied by state-linked groups were beatings of unionists; Morgan Tsvangirai was badly beaten in December 1997 after the above-mentioned successful General Strike. Student leaders and their union members were repeatedly beaten and tortured after organizing demonstrations. Others were expelled from university altogether.

As we observe in Chapter 4, the repression of labour and student organizations was intensified in 2000 and in the following years. There were frequent detentions of union leaders. In several instances, as in Redcliff and Mashava, workers were shot by police. Several died as a result of the shootings in Redcliff. Others were subjected to torture as the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) leaders were in September 2006. Some of those tortured in the form of prolonged beatings were maimed for life. As we see in Chapter 4, a major report has demonstrated in intricate detail how the state sought to undermine the labour movement and destroy its organizational base (ILO, 2009). Various detailed reports by the ZCTU itself provide other details about the politically related interventions of the state, chief amongst them being the latter's formation of a rival national labour confederation called the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU).

Similar tactics relying on considerable violence have been utilised by the state against student organizations and their members. In containing student activism, surveillance of the leaders is intense and beatings of student protesters are routine. Riot police invade university campuses and use truncheons, whips and tear gas and sometimes bare hands against students. Sometimes they have entered hostels and flushed out students using tear gas and other riot equipment. In one tragic incident, a disabled student was killed during such mayhem in a hostel at the University of Zimbabwe. In a number of instances, there has been collusion between university authorities and state institutions in suspending or expelling student leaders following protests. As learning and living conditions deteriorated in public universities in the period 2000 to 2008, protests became more frequent and so did intermittent closures of the universities. The state has remained sensitive and nervous about the students' critique of corruption and bad governance.

Violence in Operation Restore Order/Murambatsvina

In 2005, the Mugabe regime implemented a sweeping operation in urban and

rural areas to 'clean them up' ostensibly of dirt, crime and subversion. It was a sweeping military style programme purportedly to solve the simultaneous social, economic and political problems facing the country. An estimated 700,000 people were directly affected and 2.5 million people indirectly affected by the Operation. Launched in 2005, Operation *Murambatsvina* (Restore Order) (henceforth OM), engulfed the country's cities, towns and 'growth points' as well as some rural areas till the end of July that year, when UN Special Envoy Anna Tibaijuka visited and compiled a critical report. Although there were extensive preliminary surveys, the full social, economic and psychological impact of the Operation would not be felt for years to come.

OM was an example of post-election retribution by the Mugabe regime mainly against an opposition movement that had become strongly rooted in urban centres. As we observe elsewhere, no government since the founding of the modern state of Zimbabwe 120 years ago had ever attempted such an ambitious project (Sachikonye, 2005). The scale of the project in terms of numbers affected and resources destroyed was unprecedented not only in the country's history but unheard of in contemporary Africa. It was not surprising that when news and images of the project were broadcast around the globe, the response was swift and damning. Coming not long after the Asian *tsunami*, it did not take long to compare and contrast the former natural and the latter man-made Zimbabwean *tsunami*. The project was called an 'Operation' to evoke its military style and methods.

What was the official explanation for this project of social and political violence against predominantly poor urban Zimbabweans? It was claimed that it was to:

Deal with crime, squalor and lawlessness, and rebuild and reorganize urban settlements and small and medium enterprises (SMEs)... (Government of Zimbabwe, 2005:15).

More broadly, OM was intended to address what was termed 'a cocktail of social, economic and security challenges that had come to negatively impact upon the economy and the populace'. OM was specifically justified on the grounds that it sought to:

- stem disorderly and chaotic urbanization and attendant problems that hinder government and local authorities from enforcing national and local authority by-laws and providing service;
- stop economic crimes especially black market transactions in foreign currency;
- eliminate the parallel market and fight economic sabotage;

- stop the hoarding of consumer commodities, and other commodities in short supply;
- reduce high crime levels by targeting organized crime syndicates; and
- minimize the threat of major disease outbreaks due to overcrowding and squalor (Ibid., 5-6).

However, the real motivation of OM was political retribution in the aftermath of the 2005 election. Having garnered 26 of the 30 parliamentary seats in major cities and towns, and continuing to control local government in urban centres, the MDC was viewed as a persistent threat to ZANU-PF. The regime thus sought to weaken the MDC, punish its urban supporters and 'lance the boil of dissatisfaction in heavily populated urban areas before it could reach explosive levels' (ICG, 2005). The then Minister of State Security, Didymus Mutasa, had warned of the possibility of spontaneous uprisings in urban areas as a result of food shortages and economic crisis. Just prior to OM, over 100 opposition supporters had been arrested by the regime ostensibly to break up pockets of urban resistance. Indeed, the simmering anger in urban areas was also apparent when armed police beat up and forcibly dispersed residents of Harare's low-income suburb of Mabvuku in 2005. They had been protesting against having gone for three days without water. Viewed from this perspective, OM was both retribution against opposition supporters and a pre-emptive strike against urban discontents. The UN mission led by Anna Tibaijuka was very critical of OM. It criticized the violence and violation of social and economic rights that accompanied the Operation (Tibaijuka, 2005:7-8). It recommended measures against the perpetrators of the Operation.

In economic and social terms, the impact of OM was massive. The loss of jobs and livelihoods by those affected by the Operation in the informal economy meant that demand for goods and services plummeted significantly. The capacity to purchase goods, including basic commodities, by those affected by the 'tsunami' diminished. And this was immediately felt by the formal sector. There might now have been 'cleaner surroundings' in cities and towns but these came at the expense of flow of business and purchasing power. One conservative estimate was that OM put about 1 million people and dependents out of work (ZHR NGO Forum, 2005). If one accepted that about half of business activity at that time was lost from the informal economy – worth about one billion US dollars – then the direct impact on GDP would have been a reduction of 25 per cent in economic activities.

Chapter 2

Political Violence and the Scramble for Resources



Introduction

What explains the propensity to violence in the colonial and post-colonial contexts? Our Zimbabwean case strongly suggests that it is not a behavioural or psychological tendency but a compulsive scramble for resources of political power and economic benefit, and by extension, defence of these resources and privileges once they have

been appropriated. Colonial violence was endemic during both conquest and in the maintenance of material resources that were expropriated or generated, and in the repression of challenges to this state of affairs. Nationalist violence became necessary in the wresting of power from the colonial establishment where and when it was reluctant or slow in responding to demands for independence. But inter-party violence amongst nationalists themselves was an expression of intense competition for the prize of political office at independence. The party which won most seats and votes provided the first post-independence government and leader. The attainment of a 'political kingdom' would open vistas of accumulation and wealth through the state.

In this chapter, we seek to explain *why* and *how* violence has been an instrument and method of choice in the scramble for both political and economic power. This does not imply that practitioners or 'foot-soldiers' necessarily understand violence in such terms. The real objectives of violence may not be explained to them but, rather, spurious objectives may be given to them by leaders or organizers of the violence. The planners of violence can be distinct from the practitioners of the activity. Planners can manipulate the practitioners. There is a common tendency to view violence as spontaneous or random. Sustained political violence is likely to be planned and calculated rather than random. Political violence is a strategy with a specific aim. It can be a method to obtain power or leverage, to intimidate or force concessions, or a means of defending certain positions. It can be a tactic to cause conditions of disorder or panic. Those who conceive or plan violence as a strategy can be a handful of leaders or organizers of a party or movement. But they rely on a mass of supporters or special groups who do not necessarily need to understand the overall strategy or intended outcome to implement the violence.

However, it is necessary that the practitioners or participants in violence are convinced that there would be some benefit to them, directly or indirectly, from engaging in violence. This is where promises of one sort or another are effective as motivators. In most instances, it is promises of material benefit that are most effective. Promises of cash, food, alcohol, jobs, promotion, land, housing, education, amongst others, motivate recruitment into groups, including militia, to carry out violence against designated groups or parties. For youth, in particular, pledges of jobs, money and a better life act as enticement for recruitment into the militia (Interview with N.L., March 2010). Promises of recognition in society or in the party as well as ethnic solidarity also act as baits for recruitment and participation in violence.

Explaining Inter-party Violence

As we observed in Chapter 1, inter-party violence between ZAPU and ZANU in 1963-64 was an intense and major form of the politics of their rivalry. Significantly, this violence was largely non-state, although the colonial state was an interested party to the extent that it gained advantage from the continued warring between the two nationalist parties. Indeed, one of the nationalist leaders remarked that:

... I do not know how much of the actual violence was afflicted by government agents, but surprisingly well-printed posters began to appear overnight in sensitive areas, abusing me and encouraging the split... (Nkomo, 2001:101).

While it would be strange if the colonial state did not seek to profit from the split and subsequent inter-party mayhem, the motivation for the split was competition for political advantage. The calculation amongst ZANU leaders would have been that the colonial state would, sooner or later, be forced to negotiate on independence for the African majority. The prospects of their being in a more favourable position for top leadership positions would improve if they were not under Joshua Nkomo and his loyalists in ZAPU. The use of the ethnic card would not be to the disadvantage of the new party since it modelled itself as a predominantly 'Shona' party. It consciously recruited Shona intellectuals such as Hebert Chitepo and Bernard Chidzero, amongst others, to buttress this image.

Inter-party violence was basically about creating and extending political space by the two parties so as to build political advantage. To illustrate that inter-party conflict was not over ideology but over competition for electoral advantage, the Patriotic Front fought for the Independence election as two parties, namely ZANU

and ZAPU. The electoral campaign in 1980 re-ignited the inter-party rivalry of 1963-64. Consider this claim:

The greatest threat to the fair conduct of the 1980 elections came from ZANLA guerrillas in the eastern areas of the country. At ceasefire, large numbers of fighting men loyal to ZANU were not drawn into the scheduled assembly points. They stayed on in the villages they had organized on a war footing, refusing to move or allow anyone else to campaign there. No outsider was allowed in those places on pain of death... Two of our candidates and 18 of our party campaigners were killed by these adversaries. Many more were terrorised... (Ibid., 179).

The significant difference in inter-party violence before and after 1980 relates to the technology of violence as well as the role of the state in the administration of that violence. Advanced guerrilla weaponry was used in the 1980 election campaign while state infrastructure and agencies were increasingly used to create advantage to the ruling party. There was thus a qualitative technological leap in the form of inter-party violence in 1980.

Whereas parties fought each other on a more or less equal level using rudimentary weaponry such as stones, sticks and petrol bombs before independence, this changes significantly after. One of the parties gets the enormous advantage of being a ruling party in charge of the state. In addition to its members, it then uses state institutions in the instigation and perpetration of violence. The party and the state become fused into one, becoming almost indistinguishable. The interests of the party are presented as those of the state. State institutions such as the police and intelligence services increasingly become partisan institutions which serve party rather than national interests. Ominously, one of the parties can now draw on the full range of institutions and powers to cripple the other party or parties particularly during elections.

The qualitative character of political competition thus undergoes transformation after independence. This is what happened in Zimbabwe with the transformation of ZANU-PF into a ruling party. With state institutions and powers as well as technology at its disposal, it engaged in an unequal contest first with ZAPU in the 1980s, then with the MDC from 1999. These two parties demonstrated potential to be serious challengers to the ruling party; hence the massive investment poured into strategies to undermine and decapitate them. It was not an accident that inter-party violence involved killings of opposition party organizers, councillors, leaders, as well as beatings to cause fear and trauma.

'Strategic' killings of ZAPU organizers, councillors and officials in the 1985 election were interpreted as aimed at this purpose. The targeting of MDC middle-ranking organizers and officials in the 2008 election run-off was interpreted in similar terms.

As we explore in greater detail in Chapter 3, inter-party violence reached a peak at election time. It was thus not coincidence that some of the fiercest inter-party violence occurred in 1985 and 1990, in 2000 and 2002 as well as in 2008. In each instance, the balance of the terror and violence was tipped against the opposition. The immediate factor for the unleashing of violence was to tip the balance in favour of the incumbent party. It is significant that in addition to pre-election violence, there was also post-election violence against the main opposition party. Post-election violence was retributive even where the ruling party had won and maintained its majority. Chillingly, retributive violence sought to broadcast a wider lesson that ruling party hegemony should not be challenged at all.

Due to the unequal terrain on which inter-party violence is waged, the party with preponderant resources also unleashes greater levels of violence. The opposition party largely engages in violence for self-defensive purposes. Even when its violence is mainly defensive, it remains vulnerable to punishment from state-related institutions which are under instruction from the ruling party. Any form of resistance by the party is similarly treated. Ruling party and state violence closes space to counter-measures by the opposition. This explains why opposition party violence is miniscule, if not negligible, compared to ruling party-instigated violence.

Significance of Intra-party Violence

Shades of inter-party violence have been reproduced in conflict within both ruling and opposition parties. Although intra-party violence does not reach the same level of virulence leading to fatal outcomes as in inter-party violence, it can be serious and brutal. Yet the causes of intra-party violence are akin to those of inter-party conflicts. They congregate around a scramble for party positions, candidatures and promotions especially at election time, and for related sinecures associated with winning parliamentary seats and cabinet positions. This is why party primary elections tend to generate intense rivalry that degenerates into naked violence between rival candidates and factions.

In both MDC and ZANU-PF, party factions are endemic, and violence during congresses and primary elections is common. Party factions are created to bid

for ascendancy to more powerful and influential positions in a party. They tend to coalesce around a powerful or popular figure who in turn seeks to rival the party president. In other instances, the party president cultivates and dominates a faction that seeks to block the ascendancy of a rival group under another leader. However, this in-house rivalry is not as vicious as that between two different parties. Nevertheless, the rivalry consumes a considerable amount of resources including money and political capital in the party in-fighting process. In the decade beginning 2000, factionalism in ZANU-PF reared its head in provinces such as Masvingo, Harare, Mashonaland East and Bulawayo. The key faction patrons at national level were, and still are, Solomon Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa, with provincial-level factions reflecting this rivalry.

In MDC, factionalism got out of hand in 2005 leading to an open split between a faction behind Morgan Tsvangirai, the party president and that behind Welshman Ncube, the secretary general. The immediate context for the split in October 2005 was over whether to participate in Senate elections of that year. However, at the heart of the long-simmering factionalism was a power struggle between the two leaders. The creation of an alleged parallel structure in MDC became a central site of struggle for the control of the party between the two leaders:

The first major sign of problems that were being caused by this parallel structure was the violence that occurred at the Party headquarters in 2004... This structure was formed by two of the Party Presidents' aides as part of mass action, and over time this structure became a reliable source of force or militia for use in party struggles by unscrupulous politicians (Raftopoulos, 2006).

Intra-party violence was carried out by this structure. The problem of violence became so serious that the party appointed several Commissions of Enquiry to probe into its causes and possible solutions.

Prior to the rivalry and violence in MDC in 2005, there had been occasional skirmishes between some factions. Perhaps the more notable one had been between Job Sikhala and Tapiwa Mashakada resulting in the stoning of houses and injuries in Chitungwiza. Other notable incidents after the 2005 split were attacks on pro-Senate politicians in MDC-M such as Trudy Stevenson in Mabvuku (in July 2006) and clashes between supporters of two rivals, Lucia Matibenga and Theresa Makone (in 2007). Sporadic skirmishes occurred between the divorced MDC-Tsvangirai and MDC-Mutambara in 2007 and 2008. For all their seriousness and ugliness, factional violence in MDC was not as fatal as attacks on it by ZANU-

PF. There was a clear qualitative difference between the form and intensity of the violence. There were no deaths recorded, the injuries were not life-threatening, torture was rare and the amount of property destroyed was limited. One observer noted that the two MDC parties consisted of different interests including members that had originally belonged to ZANU-PF; these would have imported violence into the former (Interview with D.A., February 2010).

The violence between ZANU-PF factions was also not lethal. It was not as vicious as that applied to opposition party supporters. It would appear that there was an unwritten rule that intra-party violence was largely 'a family affair' that should not escalate into widespread killings, torture and wanton destruction. It was violence calculated to intimidate and harass a rival out of competition, or in retribution for some act. However, the mere fact that rival candidates exchanged blows or set their youth supporters on each other showed the pervasiveness of violence as a method and instrument of political competition. Significantly, there is little evidence that state institutions were directly involved in intra-party violence, although the role of agents provocateurs should not be underestimated. This had the effect of minimising its scale and escalation. However, of long-term significance is the reality that most political parties in Zimbabwe resort to violence within their structures as part of contestation between candidates and factions. This has negative consequences for the country's political culture as we will explore in a later chapter.

Violence and Land Reform

Notoriety in the use of violence for political and economic purposes in Zimbabwe spread in 2000 with the onset of 'land invasions' sometimes termed 'land occupations' or *jambanja* in the local vernacular. Violence during this phase of land reform had a dual role. It was deployed to seize land from 4,500 white farmers who owned about 11 million hectares in 2000, and to destroy the political base of MDC amongst farm-workers whose households had a population of about two million. Precipitating the violence was the referendum defeat of February 2000 and genuine fear of ZANU-PF that it could lose the forthcoming election in June of that year. ZANU-PF interpreted the defeat as the spurning of radical provisions on land in the draft constitution, as well as reflecting support for the MDC by both white farmers and their substantial work-force.

The stage was therefore set for a titanic struggle between the ruling ZANU-PF

with the backing of war veterans and party youth on the one side, and the MDC and its farmer and farm-worker supporters. An additional key player in this confrontation was state institutions: the police, army, intelligence, local state administration structures as well as the courts.

Prior to 2000, land reform had been largely a peaceful affair. But this changed afterwards because of the enormous capital that could be reaped from deploying violence to expropriate farms, and to hammer MDC supporters into 'submission'. The violence perpetrated in 2000 to 2003 was therefore unparalleled in its dual character: social violence to disown white farmers, and political violence to cow opposition supporters resident on the farms. This was the context in which key players were Mugabe himself representing his party and state, and Chenjerai Hunzvi himself leading war veterans to share in the spoils. Although land seizures were cast in ideological terms, there was no doubt that the huge amount of capital of patronage amassed and distributed would purchase some loyalty and votes at least in the short term. This was the sub-text of land reform that Mugabe exploited to camouflage violence on the farms.

There have curiously been few systematic studies of the magnitude and mode of violence during the land reform process. In their place, journalistic accounts are prolific although their analytical depth is limited. There are some exceptions. One analyst observed that:

The twin tracks of Mugabe's electoral strategy (were that)... he would attack Britain and the MDC as an agent of the British - still behaving in their imperial pomp - and he would attack the land issue at full throttle, assuming a complete command of it, and when the time was right marginalise Hunzvi, then dispense with him. First, he would give Hunzvi his head and let him escalate the invasions; Hunzvi would be a sort of cover for Mugabe... both men were looking to win an election for Zanu-PF... In a sense, Mugabe was fighting two campaigns: a parliamentary election, in which he was using the land issue, and having chosen to use the land issue, a campaign for leadership of the resurrected chimurenga, for the spiritual mantle from the days of liberation... Both men were setting out to play a very dangerous game, and neither cared greatly about the casualties along the way... (Chan, 2003:154).

Many farm-workers and more than a dozen white farmers were killed and thousands injured during the land invasions themselves. A great deal of property was looted or destroyed. Both wealthy members of ZANU-PF and bureaucrats in public service and less well-off members participated in the massive confiscation

of the farms although the former reaped greater gains from the process.

In a study conducted while the land reform process was under way, we observed that one vehicle of implementation was what was termed Operation *Tsuro* which began in 2000 (Sachikonye, 2002). The Operation had three dimensions. The first dimension was that of 'command and control' which was undertaken by a co-ordinated group from the police, CIO, Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVLA) and the Ministry of Information and Publicity (Chitiyo, 2003). This group met for regular briefings to discuss the direction of *jambanja*. The second dimension was 'operational zones' established to identify 'loyal' and 'opposition' zones and communities with the ultimate aim of converting them into 'liberated' pro-ZANU-PF zones. While the 'loyal' zones were rewarded, the 'opposition' zones were punished. The third dimension were 'ground troops' consisting of land-hungry peasants (armed with farming implements such as picks and axes) led by war veterans, with the state acting as the armourer. Operation *Tsuro* deployed both the carrot of land and the stick of violence. The carrot was reserved for peasants and assorted beneficiaries who supported ZANU-PF.

By the beginning of June of 2000, about 30 opposition supporters had been killed, 1,400 farms were occupied and 841 farms designated for appropriation and redistribution. The violence had been carefully calculated:

Looking back, the calculation of violence - as much as the violence itself - is what chills. People who died were considered as so many ciphers in a cold-blooded campaign conducted on several levels... (Ibid.,158).

A major accompanying development that would leave permanent scars on the rural political landscape was political intimidation and violence. It took the form of declaring much of rural Zimbabwe 'no-go' areas to opposition parties. Sealing them from the opposition sought to extend monopoly control to ZANU-PF, its militia and youth and traditional authorities. There was a revival of the *pungwe* and bases as institutions for indoctrination and coercion respectively. Some farms were turned into such 're-education centres' using convoys of expropriated trucks, tractors and trailers; war veterans rounded up workers en masse, taking them for indoctrination sessions sometimes lasting for days.

Lists of workers said to be MDC supporters were read out before large gatherings, then the individuals named were hustled to the front to be beaten and whipped. For hours on end, workers were forced to chant ZANU-PF slogans and sing 'liberation songs'. White farmers were sometimes

required to attend sessions and join in songs and to provide a 'good example' to their workers. Another group singled out for ZANU-PF's attention were teachers, whom government ministers accused of supporting the MDC. Party thugs invaded primary and secondary schools, harassing and abusing teachers, sometimes in front of pupils. Some were beaten; others taken off to re-education camps... (Meredith, 2002:178).



What made violence during the land invasions intense was not only the 2000 election, but the 2002 presidential election as well. With Mugabe's contested victory sealed, land invasions drew to a close in 2003 with the appointment of a Land Review Committee. Although land invasions would continue sporadically, they never reached the same scope as in 2000 to 2003.

The methodology of subsequent land invasions borrowed heavily from that used before. Marauding youths with threatening weaponry were often used by the politician, state bureaucrat or army officer who sought to 'invade' a farm. If there was resistance from the farm owner or farm-workers, they then applied force. In some instances, firearms were used causing deaths and injuries. In others, sticks, poles and metal objects were used causing serious injuries. The youth and war veterans who partook in such violence were often 'rented' and paid off by the new landowner after a successful invasion. Greed and envy were the primary motivators for such landowners in the post-2003 period. In some cases, such landowners had several farms already hence the proliferation of multiple farm-ownership within the political class and senior ranks of uniformed forces. The violence unleashed in 2000 on the farms has remained as a low-intensity conflict over ownership between the landed elite. However, there are also instances in which the land-hungry invade unused stretches of land owned by this elite.

The medium- and long-term effects of violence on the farms will take some time to unfold. A report compiled in 2002 pointed out that the violence to which many farm-workers were exposed resulted in heightened levels of depression and despair among them, and was manifesting itself in increased family violence amongst their communities (UNDP, 2002:35). Recent research suggests that related adverse effects have been widespread especially amongst farm-workers.

It was observed, for example, that one in ten of farm-workers sampled in 2009 reported one murder amongst fellow farm-workers, and that 38 per cent of sampled respondents reported that children on farms had been forced to watch public beatings or torture (GAPWUZ, 2010:21-22). About 75 per cent of the respondents also confirmed that they had been intimidated by Operation *Mavoterapapi*, which the military and militia used against the MDC following the 2008 election. Furthermore, about 65 per cent of the respondents had experienced torture with 54 per cent having received death threats (Ibid.). Finally, psychological torture was experienced by farm-workers who were forced to watch beatings (43 per cent). Sometimes fellow workers were forced to beat each other to demonstrate their loyalty to ZANU-PF, while 29 per cent were forced to intimidate each other (Ibid.). It is disturbing that 44 per cent of sampled workers had been beaten for political reasons. The former and present farm-worker population is therefore a traumatised social group of Zimbabwean society. The effects of the trauma and fear and insecurity need to be carefully explored in future work.

In concluding this discussion on violence on the farms, we need to state we do not argue against land reform per se. What we have criticized is the *method* of reform that involved considerable violence. State-sanctioned violence was a major feature of this. As we have already observed, the violence served a dual purpose of seeking to decapitate opposition support and to bring material advantage to new landowners who included state functionaries such as bureaucrats, police, army and intelligence officers as well as ruling party politicians. Violence was a means for an accumulation process that involved forceful removal of white farmers from their farms. Zimbabwe's land reform is thus an instance where political and material considerations and interests and animating violence intersect.

Coercive Accumulation

A major driver of violence in Zimbabwe especially since 2000 has been a propensity for acquisitiveness particularly amongst the political and business elites. Of course, accumulation of wealth has historically driven such processes as colonialism. Violence has been part and parcel of such processes. What is striking about Zimbabwe is that, during the period under review, there was a regression to coercion and brazen expropriation and extortion of property in clear violation of existing law and practice. The elites ignored existing regulations and conveniently suspended the rule of law during their acquisition of land and other property owned by white farmers. In addition, there was a selective disregard of

the rule of law when war veterans and a state-linked labour confederation organized a campaign of extortion against employers including industrialists in 2001 (ZHR NGO Forum, June 2001).

While some analysts have sought to sanitize the discussion on these waves of extortion and coercion involving the use of force as part of a broad process of 'primitive accumulation', we view it as naked expropriation (Moyo, 2001). While other commentators have interpreted it as a process of restorative justice, our position is that it was largely one of coercive accumulation driven by greed and corruption. We explore the link between violence and coercive accumulation with specific reference to the land and mining sectors.

Coercive accumulation became a strategy of choice of the Mugabe regime for the dual purpose of political hegemony and self-enrichment by the elites when their hold on power was rattled by the appearance and electoral performance of the MDC in 1999 and 2000 respectively. There was a clear shift to authoritarian methods of governance to thwart the MDC and to punish those sections of the bourgeoisie and civil society that sought democratic change. The white farmers and some of the industrialists and mining houses as well as NGOs were singled out for punitive action during 2000-2008. Thus instead of performing its stipulated role, the state played a central role in the expropriation process using its coercive instruments. As we see below, this entailed neutralising or undermining some of the state institutions such as the judiciary, in the process. The ruling elite selectively used state institutions such as those in the security sector to enforce expropriation while pre-empting or neutralising the judiciary from blocking the process. Thus there were rifts within the state; but these were managed and contained by the regime to achieve its political and economic objectives.

The model of accumulation that emerged was one of unregulated acquisition, rampant corruption, fiscal and monetary mismanagement, rentier arrangements and ostentatious consumerism rather than sustained investment and productivity. With more than 40 per cent of GDP wiped out during this period, it culminated in the collapse of the economy. By 2008, the printing of the local currency reached new heights fuelling an unprecedented hyperinflation of 232 million per cent. During the same period, productivity and output in the land sector plummeted significantly (Sachikonye, 2005). This necessitated significant food imports throughout the decade. Loss of considerable export earnings affected national reserves negatively.

In addition, this accumulation model made investors wary of committing themselves. The exception was the mining sector. Investment in platinum, gold and diamond mining was significant. But this was also affected by the regime of coercive accumulation and the violence and corruption that accompanied production and marketing of these minerals. The accumulation model put a premium on smuggling and connections with politicians and state operatives. There was a great deal of violence meted out to small miners or gold-panners, and expropriation of their claims. There were several operations by the police to regulate their mining operations but also to confiscate their earnings, or at least share in the spoils (Sachikonye, 2006). The middlemen in the mining sector included small and large operators and their smuggling operations reportedly involved large amounts of money. These operators especially in gold and diamond had links with highly placed politicians and state officials (Moore and Mawowa, forthcoming).

Some of the fiercest violence has occurred in the diamond mining sector. This was caused by struggles for territory and share-outs between small miners, companies, army, police and senior politicians at Chiadzwa in Marange, eastern Zimbabwe. It is estimated that up to 200 miners may have been killed in 2008 as the state sought to exert some control over mining and smuggling activities. Army brigades were to ensure that key frontline units would have an opportunity to benefit from the diamond trade (HRW, 2009). Soldiers bullied and threatened miners and other civilians:

into forming syndicates so that soldiers can control the diamond mining and trade. The enrichment of soldiers serves to mollify a constituency whose loyalty to ZANU-PF is essential. The deployment of the military in Marange also ensures access to mining revenue by senior members of ZANU-PF and the army... (Ibid., 2009:3).

Smuggling, graft and corruption remain endemic in the mining sector. Working conditions remain precarious especially for small miners who remain vulnerable to exactions and violence of the police and army. This accumulation model has resulted in loss of enormous tax revenues to the state. Rather than entering state coffers, a considerable proportion of gold and diamond revenues end up in the private pockets of the elite. It is a skewed accumulation model.

A critique of the 'primitive accumulation' conceptual framework sees inherent weaknesses, and seeks to assess the above process of coercive accumulation during the decade 2000-2010 (Davies, 2004). It argues that the real costs of the

personal wealth acquisition project have been imposed on ordinary Zimbabweans, in terms of economic decline and foregone growth:

This could well be a cost they would find worth paying if the beneficiaries were an emergent capitalist class that might provide the basis for better growth in the future. But as yet we do not see evidence of this; how many brief case businessmen of the 1980s successfully transformed into new-millennium capitalists? Instead it appears that previously accumulated wealth has been destroyed or, in effect, converted into private wealth. This has happened largely with the blessing of the government. Its policies have created the conditions for rentier capitalism, creating greater incentives for rent-seeking and speculation than for accumulation of productive capital... (Ibid., 40).

Coercive accumulation has little to show for itself. Most of the farms expropriated in 2000-2003 have not been converted to full production. Most of the proceeds from the mines are not converted into state revenues for public use. The violence that accompanies this model of accumulation leaves a permanent scar on the body politic and society. A prominent player in abetting this accumulation crisis was no less than the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe governor, Gideon Gono. His apologetic analysis of the causes of the crisis nevertheless contains some grain of truth:

Armed with instant Zimbabwe dollars and millions of US dollars generated from absolutely nothing, casino players and money launderers in the stock exchange, forex parallel market, minerals parallel market, cross-border trading, import and export businesses, ply the markets for houses, cars, basic commodities and other essentials with folded eyes that see no evil and hear no evil as far as pricing is concerned. Sensing what they think is a boom when in fact it is doom, other sellers of goods and services in the market respond by hiking their prices by the hour in ways and levels that are not only unprecedented but are also simply mad... (Gono, 2008:72).

The governor conceded that the world's highest inflation rate that gripped Zimbabwe at that time was driven by 'a casino economy'. The Reserve Bank itself had not played a small part in devising and financing this coercive accumulating model by generously funding politicians, the security services and other arms of the state. This explains why its coffers were nearly empty when the new inclusive government took office in February 2009.

Impunity of State Institutions and Agents

Two of the major explanations for continuity and regularity of violence relate to absence of cohesion and political will amongst state institutions in addressing it together with the formal and informal impunity enjoyed by those who perpetrate it. In the architecture of the Zimbabwe state, some institutions are strategically

positioned to facilitate violence while others are ill-equipped to deal with it. On one hand, the Mugabe regime has selectively encouraged some state institutions to collaborate with ZANU-PF structures and the youth militia especially during election campaigns to suppress the opposition. On the other, the police, army and intelligence services have consciously turned a blind eye when violence has been used against the opposition parties and civil society organizations. In other instances, the judiciary (from magistrates to judges) have been discouraged, if not dissuaded, from prosecuting ZANU-PF personnel who engage in violence. In yet other cases, certain groups of civil servants such as teachers have been singled out for harassment and violence especially during election campaigns.

Local government structures have been vulnerable to selective devaluation of authority by the Mugabe regime. For example, there is much empirical detail about war veterans' disruption of institutions of rural local authorities since 2001. As it was pointed out:

The emerging pattern includes at least the following: illegal dismissal or 'chasing away' of council employees, councillors, and even central government employees accused of supporting the MDC, and in some cases their replacement by war veterans; death threats and cases of alleged assault and even murder of suspected MDC supporters among council staff, teachers and traditional leaders; physical closure, occupation and in some cases destruction of council offices and property; removal of council vehicles; disruption of council meetings and routine operations; control over land distribution lists; and violent disruption of council elections... (Hammar, 2003:144).

Inevitably, the overall effect of this 'politics of disorder' has been to exacerbate councils' problems. Efficiency in state institutions has been adversely affected as a consequence of experienced personnel being forcibly removed and replaced with unqualified party loyalists (Ibid.). The purging in local government structures has been extended to the central state bureaucracy as well as to the security services including the police. There has been a strong accent on 'political correctness'; those suspected of nursing political sympathies for the MDC have been routinely demoted and dismissed.

However, there have been instances in which there have been tensions and even clashes between state-related institutions over how to deal with perpetrators of violence. In several instances, the police found themselves at the receiving end of militia violence. This occurred in Norton but this was not a common occurrence (see ZHR NGO Forum, February 2005). The more common posture of the police

was to refrain from examining cases of violence against opposition party supporters. At the same time, demonstrating much enthusiasm in following up cases where ZANU-PF supporters alleged that they had been intimidated or assaulted.

There is remarkable continuity in how the colonial and post-colonial states maintained impunity to protect state institutions and party functionaries. This exonerated them from accounting for the violence that they directed at their opponents. In the post-colonial period, impunity was conferred to state forces that participated in the Gukurahundi violence in Matabeleland in 1982-87. Later those organs that deployed violence against opposition campaigners such as Patrick Kombayi of ZUM in 1990 were awarded presidential immunity. Equally serious was the immunity granted to those who participated in violence in the 2000 election. The impunity granted in October 2000 had serious consequences. As it was argued:

War veterans and members of ZANU-PF seem to believe that they have the right to infringe on other people's rights without being held responsible or accountable at law. The police now take little action to protect persons against the political violence in the area, and in many cases, even refuse to take statements from MDC supporters. They clearly fail in their duty to protect defenceless people against their aggressors... (ZHR NGO Forum, February 2001:3).

Those who have enjoyed impunity from prosecution include killers, torturers, rapists and assaulters – as long as their acts were deemed to be ‘political’ and in broad support of ZANU-PF. They include the alleged killer of well-known MDC organizers, Tichaona Chiminya and Talent Mabika, who was identified as Joseph Mwale of the state agency, CIO. Most of such killers and torturers have been identified and placed in the public domain. Yet in some instances, they have been rewarded with promotion and other sinecures. Because they enjoy impunity, some of them have committed the same acts against opposition organizers and supporters over and over again. It would be difficult to overestimate the effect of impunity on the continuation and proliferation of violence. Any explanation of the recurrence of political violence over the past three decades should include state-conferred impunity: there have been no penalties for carrying out violence especially against persons and organizations deemed to be belonging to the opposition.

Power, Ideology and Violence

Our narrative on political violence suggests that over the past 50 years it has been a major instrument of ascendancy to power as well as a bulwark against contenders for that power. But this necessitated that there should be a legitimization

of political violence as both an instrument and an intrinsic part of the political system. It required that a supportive ideology be developed and disseminated to lend legitimacy to the recurrent use of political violence. The Zimbabwean version of nationalism from the late 1950s incorporated elements that contained justification of violence not only as a response against colonial violence but against other nationalists belonging to other parties. We saw in Chapter 1 how this adversarial nationalism exploded into violence in townships in the country's cities and towns in the 1960s. This brand of adversarial nationalism was not an integrative force but a fracturing one. Some analysts have distinguished between two phases in the development and use of the ideology of nationalism (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003). Prior to the 1990s, they believe that the post-independence national project consisted of 'civic nationalism' defined as 'broadly inclusive nationalism which maintains that the nation should be composed of all those – regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, ethnicity or language – who subscribe to the nation's political creed. Such nationalism is called civic because it envisages the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values' (Ibid.; Ignatieff, 1994). According to these analysts, Zimbabwe shifted from this brand of nationalism in the 1990s as cracks in the façade of unity began to appear in mid-decade with challenges from an increasingly autonomous and left-leaning labour movement and a growing civil society (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003). They conclude that an exclusive nationalism then emerged in which new, essentialised categories of authenticity, attachment, loyalty and entitlement began to be defined, producing what was characterized as ethnic nationalism.

We would be more sceptical about whether Zimbabwean nationalism was more inclusive and civic at independence and till the 1990s. Instead we would argue that it tended to be adversarial, exclusive and intolerant from the 1960s onwards. The above narrative of inter-party and intra-party violence as well as post-independence conflicts in Matabeleland and repression against the opposition movements showed how a narrowly-defined ideology of nationalism was used to de-legitimize forces that challenged ZANU-PF. The rhetoric of 'sell-out' and 'imperialist stooge' was as frequently used to denigrate political opponents in the 1960s as it was in the decade beginning in 2000. Recalling the 1960s, it was argued that the political critique and denigration of:

the sell-out became an even more effective way for leaders to assert their radical credentials and deal with potential rivals. The strategy of sell-out politics weakened the effectiveness of the

nationalist movement and along the way, sapped the strength of movement in many key areas especially strong trade union leadership and effectiveness... (Scarnecchia, 2008:8).

For instance, the denunciation of Reuben Jamela, the trade union leader, in 1962 as a 'sell out' and 'imperialist stooge' by Robert Mugabe and other nationalists



left a legacy of mistrust and suspicion in labour unions that proved difficult to erase in later decades. Similarly, the rhetoric of demonization against Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC narrowed the scope and opportunity for inter-party dialogue till 2008.

More worryingly, the ideology of exclusive nationalism and its accompanying rhetoric of 'sell-out', 'stooge' and 'totem-less outsiders' have signalled a licence to employ violence against ZANU-PF's political opponents. This is the tragedy of this brand of nationalism with its inciting language. It is not a coincidence that 'hate speech' has increasingly become a major feature of Zimbabwean political discourse. The Mugabe regime has relied on a powerful discursive link between the sentimentality of nationalism and legitimization of violence. In that perspective, the nation provides its subjects with their primary form of belonging with nationalism constituting an ethic of heroic sacrifice that justified violence in the defence of one's nation against enemies, internal and external (Ignatieff, 1994). The demonization and excommunication of political opponents was perfected by ZANU-PF and its sycophantic media. As it was perceptively observed:

Anyone seen as opposing the regime becomes a non-citizen, an enemy, subject to violent attack and beyond any protection by the state. The notion of 'foreign-ness' and of constructing literal enemies out of the so-called strangers and intruders, has been critical to the regime's strategic narrowing of national identity and belonging... (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003:28).

This was the ideological underpinning to the widespread use of political violence as described in Chapter 1. The regime's ideological justification provides the necessary background to understanding systemic violence in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Systemic Violence and the 2008 Election



Introduction

The 2008 election was the most violent in the annals of Zimbabwe's post-independence history. It was the most tightly fought election between ZANU-PF, which had ruled since independence, and the MDC, the opposition party founded in 1999. It was an election in which ZANU-PF lost its parliamentary majority and the first round of the presidential election. By most accounts, the 2008 election was seminal and paradigmatic. If it had been a normal election that met criteria of fairness and freedom, then there would have been a change of government (or regime change) in March 2008. However, this was not to be. This chapter seeks to explain *why* and *how* the electoral process in 2008 was hijacked by ZANU-PF, and state institutions, as soon as election results indicated that their hegemony was mortally challenged. There was a wholesale resort to systemic violence by state institutions to shore up ZANU-PF's fortunes in the wake of its electoral losses. The resort to systemic violence and terror became imperative in order to hijack and subvert the electoral process. The chapter then assesses the rigged outcome of the electoral process and its wider significance for the political system. Finally, it considers patterns of post-election retribution and related conflicts which continued into 2010.

Political Context and the Electoral System

In Chapter 1, we briefly referred to the tendency for political violence to reach a peak during elections. In order to explain the key factors that contribute to this unfortunate trend, an understanding of the political context in Zimbabwe becomes important. The ideological framework of the political context is one of subscription to the one-party state concept by ZANU-PF and key state institutions (principally those that deal with security and information as well as propaganda). Although they failed to institute the concept by legislation, they have aspired and adhered to it in spirit but also in practice by ensuring that state institutions are dominated by recruitment from one particular party. The state media is controlled by and provides most space to one particular party, and ensures that national history and values are interpreted from a particular party perspective. The military, police

and intelligence services and the bulk of the public service imbibed this ideological ethos. Thus there was a conscious strategy to construct a one-party state in which there was a fusion of the ruling party and its ideology with the state between 1980 and 2000. This attempt at pervasive one-party domination was embedded in structures set up for the electoral system.

The post-independence electoral system reflected this orientation toward one-party state hegemony as has been explored elsewhere at length (Moyo, 1992; Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000; Sachikonye, 2000, 2004). Built into the constitution were, for example, sweeping powers of patronage of the president. Until this was changed in 2008, 20 per cent of seats in the House of Assembly were dispensed through this presidential patronage. Thus the president had the power to appoint 12 members of parliament, eight others by virtue of their being provincial governors and ten chiefs to sit in parliament, and this constituted 20 per cent of the 150-seat Assembly. This patronage ensured that ZANU-PF needed to win only 46 of the 120 directly contested seats to be able to win a parliamentary majority to form a government. The president's patronage of 30 seats sealed this majority. The vestiges of presidential patronage remain in Constitutional Amendment 19 under which the president appoints 30 of the 93 members of Senate. In sum, the electoral system has not been fair or just and thus has not provided a level playing field to contesting political parties (Sachikonye, 2000).

Prior to 2008, there were additional features that made the electoral system skewed in favour of ZANU-PF. These were the appointment of the Electoral Commission and the Delimitation Commission by the president without consultation with the principal stakeholders; and provision of a central role to a partisan Registrar-General in voter registration. Finally, restrictions on monitoring and observation of elections limited their transparency.

Pressure from opposition parties and civil society forced an impetus towards reform of the electoral system. The Constitutional Commission draft of 1999 conceded that presidential patronage in appointment of 30 seats should be abolished. However, because the draft was rejected in the 2000 referendum for various reasons, the electoral system was preserved by the Mugabe regime until 2008. By then, two important developments had taken place. These were firstly the adoption of the SADC Principles and Guidelines on Democratic Elections of 2004 of which Zimbabwe was a signatory, and secondly the Inter-Party Dialogue initiated between ZANU-PF and MDC in 2007 (SADC, 2004). Both processes

pressed for electoral reform including the repeal of the presidential patronage in the appointment of some Assembly members. Other reform measures eventually adopted included the publication of voting results at polling stations to improve transparency in the electoral process.

The reforms in the electoral system on the eve of the 2008 were partial and hesitant rather than comprehensive. A large factor that had the potential of undermining the reforms was state institutions especially the military. Having increased their power and influence within the state through increased self-confidence, appointments into government bureaucracy and accumulation of wealth, the military leadership arrogantly announced in unequivocal terms that it would not countenance a transfer of power through an electoral process. In fact, the first set of expressions against political change through an electoral process was made during the 2002 presidential campaign. The joint statement of the military, police, intelligence and prison heads was a volley aimed at both the opposition and the international community that an election would not lead to a transfer of power. They warned that:

The highest office of the land is a straight jacket whose occupant is expected to observe the objectives of the liberation struggle. We will therefore not accept, let alone support or salute, anyone with a different agenda that threatens the very existence of our sovereignty, our country, our people... (as quoted in ZHR NGO Forum, 2007).

This statement was a reassertion of loyalty to Mugabe as well as a warning to the opposition. However, it is significant that this expressed contempt of the democratic and electoral process, of the constitution and of the people's will was repudiated not only by the opposition but also by some SADC leaders. In 2008, a variant of this position of the military was that they would not salute a president other than Robert Mugabe. A re-affirmation of the 2002 position, this statement hung as a cloud over the 2008 election campaign.

It is important to relate utterances of the leadership of the military-security complex to its increased strength and profile in state governance structures. For instance, the military, police, intelligence and prisons were key players in the Joint Operations Command (JOC) and in the National Security Council (NSC). These structures have grown as powerful as the Cabinet, if not more so. These unelected extra-constitutional bodies have become active in policy-making and implementation besides playing active roles in the repression of opposition parties and civil society organizations.

The origins of the concept and structure of JOC and NSC are interesting and revealing in themselves. JOC was first established in colonial Zimbabwe in 1966 in response to incursions of nationalist guerrillas. At that juncture, it was a structure under which the police, army, air force and intelligence co-ordinated their operations against the nationalist movement. After 2000, JOC co-ordinated responses to what was perceived as an opposition threat as well as from other forces that loathed the Mugabe regime. Beyond this authoritarian role, JOC had an interest in wider economic opportunities relating to land distribution, food security and mining ventures. Although an unelected body, JOC saw its role as buttressing the Mugabe regime as well as advancing the collective interests of the *securocrats* consisting of the leadership stratum of the military, police and intelligence. The extension and consolidation of the power and influence of the *securocrats* has been documented elsewhere but was generally described as 'militarization' of the state and its various institutions (Rupiya, 2004; ZI, 2004). At the apex of JOC and NSC is the Commander-in-Chief who has presided over this process of 'militarization'.

A further layer to the militarization process was added with the creation, from 2000, of a militia on a national scale. Drawn from youth and war veterans, this militia worked closely with uniformed services during elections in 2002, 2005 and 2008. The state budget was drawn upon to train thousands of youth at the national service 'Border Gezi' training camps. Their numbers swelled to over 50,000 by 2008 with recruitment concentrated in rural areas but especially amongst households of newly-settled small farmers in what were termed A1 farms (Interview with S.T., February 2010). As the attrition rate amongst police and military increased due to HIV-AIDS, it was recruitment from this militia that replenished their numbers. Some of the most brutal forms of political violence were perpetrated by this militia. In sum, the ingredients for violence existed in abundant quantity well before the 2008 election (CSVR, 2009). But they would be kept in check only if the election went in favour of the incumbent regime. Such was the case in the 2005 election when a divided MDC lost some of the electoral ground that it had acquired in 2000. But such would not be the case in 2008.

Systemic Violence and State Institutions

The outcome of the March 2008 election, like that of the February 2000 referendum, caught ZANU-PF and the state by surprise. They had not anticipated loss of their parliamentary majority or Mugabe's loss in the first round of the presidential poll.

As in 2000, the party and the state consciously and systematically planned to go on a 'war footing' in which violence would be the principal weapon for voter coercion in the presidential run-off election.

Unlike in the pre-March 2008 period, the presidential run-off campaign was a visibly militarized one (Masunungure, 2009). The *securocrats*, rather than ZANU-PF itself, were in the forefront spearheading the campaign:

Available evidence suggests that the regime came to the conclusion that its party had failed in the march to 29 March and therefore the military should lead the march to 27 June... (Ibid., 80).

Mugabe did not anticipate a win in the 'sink or swim' presidential run-off unless a military-style leadership campaigned for him (*Independent*, 23 May 2008). The deliberate recourse to violence to coerce voters for Mugabe was:

to reduce the run-off contest to a battle between the bullet and the ballot. In this battle, ZANU-PF was making it starkly clear that in its political world, the bullet is supreme and the ballot subservient to it... (Masunungure, 2009:84).

Having reached the decision to conduct a military-style election campaign, the next step was choice of strategy to implement this. The strategy was built around what was code-named CIBD (Coercion, Intimidation, Beating and Displacement). The overall campaign was termed Operation *Makavhotera Papi* (Operation Whom did you Vote for?). The Operation sought to identify and punish those who had voted against Mugabe in the first presidential round. As an analyst described the process:

It began in the rural areas, and within them, in the three provinces of Masholand West, East and Central. Incidentally and ironically, these were Zanu-PF strongholds... From Mashonaland provinces, the violence spread to other provinces and from rural areas spread to urban centres. In a tragic sense, the whole country was unified, in violence, and its pattern was the same, indicating a central point of organization and execution (Ibid., 87).

It was the centralization of the planning and execution of the violence that was chilling. Those who fell victim to it were utterly defenceless in the sense that state institutions such as the police did not offer protection or assistance because of their implication in the process itself.

Some reports were more specific about who were involved in that centralized direction of Operation *Makavhotera Papi*: some 200 senior army officers supervised ZANU-PF

militia in the countrywide operations (*Washington Post*, 5 July 2008). In overall charge, however, was the JOC under the leadership of Emmerson Mnangagwa. Interviews carried out with more than 20 eyewitnesses and victims from separate incidents named at least ten senior ranking police, prison and army officers who reported to JOC as inciting, or participating in, the abuses (HRW, 2008:19). Their participation could not have occurred without the knowledge and acquiescence, if not direct participation, of JOC. Other reports recalled what were termed ‘Police Project Meetings’ held between 6 and 9 May 2008 at which senior officers addressed members of the police force at all camps in Harare province (Ibid.). Their message in the meetings was that the MDC would *never* rule the country, and that the police should be ready to go to war if Morgan Tsvangirai won the second round of the presidential election.

Several reports have documented extensively how Operation *Makavhotera Papi* was executed (CCJPZ, 2009; HRW, 2008; ZPP, 2008; CSU, 2010). It was, by and large, a ruthlessly brutal campaign of violence and terror. Some of the evidence pointed to direct involvement of army and air force officers in acts of violence and torture including night-time raids in search of MDC activists and supporters as well as providing logistical and other forms of support to war veterans and ZANU-PF to enable them to carry out acts of violence (HRW, 2008). In addition, officers deployed by JOC played a role in setting up torture camps and bases in Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central and Masvingo in the immediate aftermath of the March 2008 election. The camps were used for beating and torturing victims to punish them for voting for the MDC, to extract information on the whereabouts of MDC activists and supporters, and to force victims to denounce MDC and swear allegiance to ZANU-PF (Ibid).

Table 2: Frequency of Alleged Perpetrators, April-June 2008

War veterans	21%
Zanu PF youth	45%
Zanu PF supporters	17%
ZRP	7%
ZNA	9%
CIO	2%
MDC/Other	1%

Source: CSV, 2009:32

There was an extensive use of government infrastructure in the organizing of the violence. Schools, hospitals and government buildings were used as torture bases. The age of the beaten victims was shocking, if not incredible: 10 per cent were under the age of 12 and 15 per cent were over the age of 60. There were cases of violence against teachers in front of school children (CSU, 2010). As a form of retribution, some elderly persons were severely beaten because of their children's participation in politics. In one particularly brutal case, a headman was axed to death in front of his elderly wife, and although she herself was axed in the head, she survived (Ibid.). This was because they did not produce their son for questioning by the militia. Based on their sample, CSU established that up to 90 per cent of victims were able to give a reason why they were targeted. For example, about 190 teachers were targeted because of their role in the electoral process as vote counting officers. Significantly, most of the key MDC organizers and activists were killed in the first few weeks of the violence in April-May 2008. Revealingly, most deaths occurred on particular days perhaps suggesting synchronised elimination (Ibid.).

There appeared to be a pattern to the manner in which violence was deployed. One tactic was to use non-locals to come to an area and spearhead the attacks on the opposition activists and supporters. These non-locals acted on information provided by ZANU-PF structures:

Perpetrators moved in groups of up to 30 and established 'distinguishable bases' supplied from confiscated foodstuffs and other necessities. The overwhelming numbers of perpetrators made it difficult for individual victims to defend themselves. The tools used varied from logs, sjamboks, machetes, steel rods, knobkerries to knives and chains. However, there were cases where tools and equipment associated with security agencies like the police (batons and guns) were used in the perpetration of the violence, suggesting the direct involvement of state security agents or deliberate issuance of such tools to party militia... (CCJPZ, 2009:43).

When the victims sought medical treatment at clinics and hospitals, they were often blocked from doing so by ZANU-PF supporters and state authorities. This was callous as it led to a worsening of their condition sometimes leading to death. This inhuman treatment was strongly condemned by such groups as the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights.

Finally, in an attempt to impose a blackout on the violence in rural areas, a regime directive prohibited movement by humanitarian agencies and NGOs. This was

to limit the filtering out of news about the violence being meted out to the opposition. This compounded the suffering in the affected areas. In the next section, we draw upon selected episodes of violence to illustrate the forms it took and the rationale behind them. We also briefly assess the consequences of the violence for the communities affected and for the political process.

Episodes of Violence and Terror

The scope and depth of the violence and terror that accompanied the presidential run-off campaign in April-June 2008 is impossible to convey without referring to specific episodes. Such episodes illustrate the organized and orchestrated nature of the violence and terror as well as highlight the role of the specific agencies involved. The following episodes were reported by credible organizations whose previous reports were respected as balanced, and two episodes were described to the present author two years after they occurred (CCJPZ, 2009, HRW, 2008; Field Interviews, 2010).

Box 1

Episode 1: Six deaths at Chiweshe

On the night of May 4, villagers in Chiweshe noticed groups of people being trucked to Chaona Primary School in the centre of Chiweshe. The villagers identified the people as being youth militia from Border Gezi camp in Mt. Darwin, Mashonaland Central as well as ZANU-PF youths and 'war veterans' from surrounding villages. Up to 300 of these people arrived at the primary school. An announcement was then made that on the following day people should go to a meeting at the primary school. In the early hours of May 5, ZANU-PF youths went knocking door-to-door calling people to attend the meeting. When the people got there, they were addressed by a person who was identified as Major Cairo Mhandu, a war veteran and former soldier.

Mhandu told the crowd: 'this community needs to be taught a lesson. It needs re-education. We want people to come forward and confess about their links and association with MDC and surrender to ZANU-PF. This is what we want'. No one came forward. After a brief pause, one of the ZANU-PF youths grabbed a 76-year old woman and made her lie in front of the crowd on her stomach. They said, 'we will beat this woman if people don't come forward'. They started beating her with logs on her buttocks. After 10 minutes, three men came forward and said they were MDC just to stop the youth from beating the woman. Mhandu said this is what he wanted, more people to come forward.

ZANU-PF supporters also had a list of 20 MDC supporters who they called out. They proceeded

to beat these people and demand that they each of them reveal the names of at least five other activists. In pain, the victims would shout out names of any people and they too would be called out and beaten.

The ZANU-PF youths and supporters would bring forward 3 or 4 people at a time. They tied the legs of the victims and handcuffed their hands before forcing them to lie on their stomachs. Three ZANU-PF youths with thick sticks would stand on either side of the victim and take turns beating the victims on the back, back of the legs and buttocks. ZANU-PF youths and supporters either stripped the women naked or down to their underwear before beating them. In some incidents, the perpetrators tied barbed wire around the genitals of men and tied the other end of the wire around logs. The perpetrators then forced the men to use their genitals to pull the logs as they continued to beat them. Several men sustained serious injuries to their genitals as a result.

The beatings continued all that afternoon and evening. More than 70 people were beaten. Six men subsequently died from the horrific beatings and torture...

Source: HRW, 2008b:36-37

Box 2

Episode 2: Epworth: violence and terror against the opposition

A base was set up in our ward in May 2008. It was used for ZANU-PF meetings but also for beating up people suspected of belonging to MDC. Lists had been drawn up to be used for this purpose... In some instances, ordinary people walking on roads and paths in the ward were summoned to the base to chant ZANU-PF slogans. Anybody seen reading independent newspapers like The Zimbabwean was labelled as belonging to the opposition and hauled to the base.

During those dangerous days, there was time called 'Zero Hour'. This was time during which the police would not take any action against those who beat and tortured opposition supporters...Up to now, victims have not found restitution. Some were killed. I remember one case in which relatives were not allowed to mourn their loved ones. One of the deceased not only had his house levelled to the ground but his decomposing body was left in the open for several days...

Source: Field Interviews, Epworth, May 2010

Box 3

Episode 3: Beatings in Chitungwiza by soldiers

In Chitungwiza, a town some 30 kilometres from Harare, the Chair of Chitungwiza Residents Association and chief election agent for an MDC MP was assaulted by soldiers on 16 April 2008. His testimony:

'I was driving towards St. Mary's in Chitungwiza when I noticed four soldiers in uniform beating up somebody on the side of the road. He was lying down helplessly as they beat him. I slowed down to investigate but was stopped by one of the soldiers who had a gun. He then ordered me out of the car at gunpoint. Without warning, the soldiers started beating me with batons, booted feet and a fan belt. They beat me on the buttocks. Now my buttocks are heavily swollen and blackened.

'Another group of ten soldiers came and accused me of being an MDC member and belonging to Tsvangirai's party. As I was being beaten, they were ransacking my car... One soldier, who identified himself as Black Jesus, did most of the beating. They said, "you belong to Tsvangirai and you want to give the country to the whites... We will murder you." They were boasting of being given a three-day assignment to "bring hell" to the people of Chitungwiza.

'I didn't report to the police because I knew from experience that no action is ever taken, in fact, I feared that the police would end up arresting me... They only let me go when they stopped another car and started beating the driver of that car...'

Source: HRW, 2008b:42-43

Box 4

Episode 4: Violence and terror in Chikomba

In a Chikomba District study site, a ZANU-PF chair-person, a councillor of the area, war veterans, youth militia and the campaign team were behind the violence in May-June 2008. The perpetrators were armed with sticks and batons similar to those used by the police. The militia operated in groups of 15 and 20 and moved from one homestead to another looking for supporters of the opposition.

It was on 4 June when 10 war veterans invaded Mupi's home in Chikobvu village, Ward 27 at midnight. They came to the door and knocked hard. Mupi instructed his wife to respond. Upon responding, they demanded to see Mupi. The wife lied that Mupi had attended a funeral in

the village. They insisted that the wife should show them where the funeral was. The wife refused to open the door but the war veterans threatened her and urged her in strong terms to open if she wanted her life. Mupi and his wife agreed that they should remove the door fastener. On removing the fastener, Mupi came out running fast and his wife fastened the door quickly... This angered the war vets who then vandalized the door, forcing it open. They got in and assaulted the wife with logs and baton sticks, dragging her out of the room.

The wife freed herself at last and managed to run away. She sought medical attention from Sadza Hospital after reporting to the police. The police only recorded the incident and took no further action. Mupi left to seek refuge in Harare fearing for his life, returning towards the end of July.

After the escape, Mupi's son was beaten thoroughly by the war veterans to force him to disclose the whereabouts of his father. The wife was made to surrender her husband's regalia, including MDC T-shirts and cards in full view of the public. The wife was also ordered to confess and defect from the opposition to ZANU-PF. Further, she was asked to attend all meetings without fail. Upon Mupi's return, the political situation had stabilized...

Source: CCJPZ, 2009:49-50

Box 5

Episode 5: Buhera study site

In Ward 10 of Buhera district, the base was established at Munyanyi Business Centre. The premises used were the community's clinic which had ceased operating long back. In this particular ward, the army was active in threatening and beating up people. The violence started in mid-May. Initially, the community noticed an increased number of vehicles with no registration numbers coming to the clinic. Then they noticed that there were soldiers staying at the clinic. After the unmarked vehicles had spent a week in the area, moving from village to village picking up kraal-heads and other known ZANU-PF people, word came round that violence against those who had voted for MDC had started.

Working with the youth militia, the soldiers would bring opposition members captured from other areas and beat them at the clinic. The clinic is located in the community and hence the community would hear people screaming as a result of torture. The perpetrators of violence also used an old disused abattoir to tie opposition supporters to the central iron bar of the abattoir. The victims would then be beaten in full view of the public. The loud screams that came from the abattoir were heard throughout the village...

One Sunday word came round that nobody was supposed to go to church but attend the ZANU-PF rally at the base. That Sunday youths armed with sjamboks ran riot in the village threatening everyone who would not attend the rally... The atmosphere was tense with speaker after speaker preaching violence against those who had voted for MDC in the March election. Soldiers raised their guns in the air and threatened to shoot all the people at the rally. Then they asked for those who had voted for MDC in March and many confessed in public. Those who did so were asked why they decided to leave the party which liberated them. People spent the whole day without eating...'

Source: CCJPZ, 2009:57-58

Box 6

Episode 6: Chitungwiza violence

On 17 June 2008, about 200 ZANU-PF youths forced entry into Mr. Chiyo's dura-walled premises at 11 p.m. on a night when there was a power cut and it was therefore dark. Mr. Chiyo's premises were being used as a campaign base for Morgan Tsvangirai. The youths broke in unaware of the presence of MDC youths; they were fended off by 20 youths and the Chiyo family. But the ZANU-PF youths came back 15 minutes later with reinforcements including vehicles. They were led by a member of the Zimbabwe Republic Police locally known as 'Madzibaba' who was using his own personal vehicle...

Most of the MDC youths were able to escape except one of Mr. Chiyo's sons, Ford. Once inside the premises, the youth militia broke all the window panes, destroyed doors and looted household property that was inside. In the process of looting and stealing, they found Ford hiding in the house... The mob started beating Ford, an unfortunate passer-by and two MDC youths they had caught trying to escape the melee.

After looting and ransacking the house, the ZANU-PF gang proceeded to burn the property using fuel bombs. The house was saved from complete destruction because there was no electricity. After setting the house on fire, the militia took Ford and the MDC youths to their base. On return in the early hours of the following day, Mr. Chiyo assessed the damage and rushed to make a report at the Makoni Police Station. At 8 a.m., a convoy of police with the member in charge of the police station visited the property. The lead policeman was the same 'Madzibaba' who had led the entourage of destroyers the previous night. The group of police personnel said that they had come to investigate and take statements from the family members. 'Madzibaba' said they had come to investigate the way things had

happened to which one of the Chiyo family members retorted by asking why he was investigating a story in which he had participated. 'Madzibaba' was visibly shaken and did not say a word. It was only when they were leaving that he responded asking what proof they had that he participated in the destruction. Later in the day, 'Madzibaba' phoned to inform the family that the body of one of the MDC youths had been found near a ZANU-PF base. The body was found skinned with private parts and eyes removed... The bodies of Ford, the other MDC youth and an unidentified passer-by were found along Beatrice road. Ford had three bullets in his head. The other youth had a spear pierced into her body towards her heart, her private parts removed, the neck was broken and head severed from the body...

Source: CCJPZ, 2009:74-75

Box 7

Episode 7: Terror in a Mutasa community

In Mutasa district, ZANU-PF campaigners tried on several occasions to provoke MDC supporters into violence. They attempted to ambush our candidate... During the run-off campaign, war veterans who had been drafted from Mtoko, some 100 kilometres away, began to write lists of people who had campaigned for the MDC. They said the people on the lists should die. So some MDC campaigners had to sleep in the bush and on mountains. Other fled the district altogether...

ZANU-PF encouraged war veterans to set up a local base where interrogations and intimidation of MDC supporters took place. The war veterans forced people to attend meetings where they were told to chant slogans. There were threats to 'cut off' ears of MDC supporters. One MDC male supporter from a local area was abducted and later killed in a village 15 kilometers away. A female MDC campaigner was also abducted and her left foot was axed. Fortunately, she later escaped and received some treatment at a hospital...

A lot of fear was generated by these events in the district during the run-off campaign period. People, especially women, voted for the ZANU-PF candidate due to fear...

Source: Field Interviews, April 2010

The seven episodes quoted verbatim above are amongst hundreds, if not thousands, which demonstrate certain clear patterns of the systemic violence and terror, which were waged against the opposition. Clearly, there was a solid

alliance and working relationship as well as co-ordination between ZANU-PF party, youth militia, war veterans and state agencies like the police and army. The brutality and savagery of the beatings, torture and killings were staggering. The clear intent was to spread terror and fear amongst the electorate. The calculation would have been that although the killings remained around several hundred, the message of fear and terror would reach far and wide. The potency of the demonstration effect repeated at countless *pungwes* was best captured in the saying 'kill one, frighten a thousand' (Sun Tsu).

Outcome of the Run-off Election

The rigging of the presidential run-off election did not occur at the vote counting stage but much earlier. The instigation of violence and terror as elaborated in the preceding sections was in itself part of the process of rigging the electoral playing field against the opposition. Perhaps more calculated and sinister was the violence directed at the party structures of MDC; its election organizers and polling agents were targeted in most of the killings. Most were middle-ranking party officials but holding strategic positions and responsibilities in running the run-off campaign. As one civil society leader said, ZANU-PF calculated that by eliminating this layer of organizers, they would paralyze MDC structures (Interview with D.A., January 2010). An example of such targeted killings was that of Tonderai Ndira, an MDC organizer in the Mabvuku township of Harare.

Second, it was significant that ZANU-PF concentrated the most intense violence and terror in the 'swing provinces' of Mashonaland East, West and Central, which had formerly been strongholds of the party. As it was explained:

For ZANU-PF it was more hurtful to lose a single seat in its stronghold than to lose all seats in the enemy's... Even constituencies where it won, the brutal campaign visited those areas whose polling stations had recorded a loss for the party or where a large opposition vote had been recorded. ZANU-PF treated those who voted for the opposition in its traditional backyard as stray animals, who, like stray animals had to be brought back into the kraal, but after some whipping. They had to be taught not to go astray next time... (Masunungure, 2009:91).

Thus ZANU-PF viewed voters as its *captive* electorate subject to disciplining if they showed signs of independence in exercising their constitutional rights of expression, association and choice. By denying them these rights, ZANU-PF was clearly in contempt not only of the voters, but of the constitution itself. The contempt of the people's will was conveyed graphically in such belligerent

language as 'the country was won by the barrel of the gun and should we let it go at the stroke of a pen' and 'should one just write an X and then the country goes like that' (Mugabe quoted in *Herald*, 20 June, 2008; Masunungure, 2009:92). Bludgeoning voters into submission amply confirmed that the party's powers of persuasion had diminished considerably.

However, ZANU-PF was still uncertain whether the intimidation and terror campaign would lead to the results that they sought. It therefore decided to directly supervise the voting process itself. Mostly in rural areas, ZANU-PF local leadership demanded that voters record the serial numbers on their ballots, and hand over this information to this party's



'wardens' together with their personal details. This was supposedly to enable the 'wardens' to check on whom the voters had voted for (Ibid.). This was clearly an electoral irregularity that should have been disallowed by the Electoral Commission. There were two additional irregularities. One was to force voters to first assemble at the headman's homestead where they were given numbers after which they would proceed to the polling stations led by their kraal heads (Ibid). As a report by an election monitoring organization confirmed:

In most rural constituencies, voters were reportedly herded to polling stations by traditional leaders and allegedly instructed to vote for the ruling party candidate. They were also ordered to record their ballot papers' serial numbers and would after polling give them to the local party leaders. Soldiers and police presence was reportedly heavy, in some cases overshadowing that of voters... (ZESN, 2008:66).

Another was to intimidate suspected opposition members into feigning illiteracy so that they would be 'assisted' to vote. Whatever the client's intention, those assisting the voter invariably 'voted' for ZANU-PF. It should not come as a surprise that the run-off election recorded the highest number of spoilt ballot papers to date. This was some of the evidence that the electoral process had been a travesty.

Most international election observation teams including those of the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament concluded that the run-off did not meet the criteria of a free and fair election.

Economic Penalties on the Opposition

While most accounts of the violence during the 2008 election have concentrated on physical harm, there has been little attention to economic violence against the opposition and civil society. Forcible confiscation of property and other assets of the targeted opposition organizers and supporters was a major development, if not departure, in this election. A range of property from livestock such as cattle and goats, food crops such as maize, and farming equipment was confiscated from MDC members by ZANU-PF supporters and militia, especially in rural areas. Extensive case-studies were carried out on this trend of economic victimization by the CCJPZ (2009) and ZHR NGO Forum (2009).

In some instances, victims suffered both political violence and confiscation of property as penalties for supporting the opposition. A sample in the Zaka district of Masvingo showed that 86 per cent of victims had their livestock, crops, food, clothes, sound equipment (radios, cassettes and solar equipment), cash, kitchen equipment, amongst other items, confiscated by ZANU-PF supporters (CCJPZ, 2009:98). In one of the wards of the district, MDC polling agents were fined goats or chickens.

A more severe form of punishment against opposition supporters was the burning of their houses. In Bikita district of Masvingo, some 64 houses were burnt down resulting in three deaths (Ibid.). Other victims lost incomes when their business was burnt or closed:

One businessman was made to close his grinding mill for the whole of June as punishment for supporting the opposition... It is apparent that the most frequent punishment meted out was the payment of fines through livestock. This was followed by the payment of fines using crops... (CCJPZ, 2009:98).

Confiscation of property, tools and other assets undermined the livelihoods of the political victims. Their production has suffered while their incomes were undermined. One civic leader observed that the burning of huts was not only dehumanizing but was punishment aimed at causing hunger amongst victims (Interview with D.R., February, 2010). In some instances, the victims had no other

forms of livelihood than humanitarian assistance. In a number of districts, the victims mainly depended on church support such as that provided by the Catholic Development Commission (CADEC) (CCJPZ, 2009:110). At several junctures, such church humanitarian support was crucial to meet the basic needs of several thousands who had been displaced or had their assets confiscated. Those who sought assistance needed accommodation in 'safe houses', blankets, food, soap, water and proper sanitary facilities. From the point of view of ZANU-PF supporters, election campaign violence provided them an economic opportunity to 'grab' such scarce assets as food and farming equipment in rural areas. The



culture of aggrandisement and entitlement through unlawful 'grabbing' of property of others was dangerously taking root in rural areas. Seeds of future conflict including retribution were being sown across the length and breadth of the country.

In a sense, economic penalties against opposition members were not a new phenomenon. They were already discriminated against by being denied food aid that is channelled through state and ZANU-PF structures. What was a new and sinister element was expropriation of assets that support victims' livelihoods as well as for their own unlawful gain. Communities experienced such politically motivated economic sanctions and taxes against the opposition on a systematic scale. Traditional norms and values of justice, fairness and compensation were violated by such sanctions and taxes against the opposition. As we will explore in Chapter 5, the momentum towards recovery for confiscated assets grew strongly after the June 2008 run-off. In some instances, it took the form of community attempts at recovering assets or retribution against perpetrators. Reports of such autonomous actions aimed at recovery or retribution were made in such districts as Buhera, Nyanga and Mutoko amongst others. Like elsewhere in the country, the full effects of political and economic violence still have to play out fully, as we will see.

Chapter 4

Violence and Political Culture



Introduction

What have been the effects of violence on Zimbabwe's political culture? How has political violence shaped the views of citizens towards participation in the political process? These are issues of pertinent interest to this study. However, it is necessary to begin by providing an update on more recent patterns of inter-party and intra-party violence as well as the phenomenon of violence against civil society organizations (CSOs). It is argued that there appears to be a worryingly imitative adoption of ZANU-PF-style political violence as an instrument and method of scramble for power and resources amongst some opposition parties and CSOs.

Wittingly or unwittingly, some of the tactics and forms of violence tried and tested by ZANU-PF over the previous three decades have been adopted by elements within those organizations particularly at key moments of contests for power and other resources. The muscular approach to politics – use of physical attacks including assaults – has been imported into ranks of opposition parties and CSOs. While the official policies of the latter may be against use of violence, some elements have nevertheless employed it to further their narrow interests. This has unfortunately raised the spectre of violence pervading political culture and practice as a whole. However, let us begin by outlining some of the more common features of that violence in relation to power contests between and within parties.

Inter-party Violence in 2000-2008

Chapter 2 explored the historical roots of inter-party violence in the internecine contest for political high ground between ZAPU and ZANU parties in the townships and rural areas in 1963 and 1964. The legacy of those experiences of aggressive muscular attacks on each other for support among the masses were conflicts in 1982 and 1987 between the same parties albeit in a changed context but with a more devastating technology of war and repression. In the more quiescent period between 1990 and 1999, the stakes were much lower because the potential and actual opposition was much weaker. This changed with the birth of the MDC

in 1999 and with its first foray in a closely fought election contest in June 2000.

This chapter will not attempt to highlight the major features of inter-party violence between 2000 and 2008 because there are comprehensive dossiers that exist already (see various reports of ZHR NGO Forum 2001-2008, Amani Trust, Amnesty International, HRW, ZPP, SPT. Here we will touch only on changing and constant patterns during the period. The main contestation was between MDC and ZANU-PF, although from 2005 there was also contestation between MDC-Tsvangirai and MDC-Mutambara parties. In 2000, violence by ZANU-PF was mainly directed at MDC election contestants and organizers but also against farmers and farm-workers, as we saw in Chapter 2. In 2001, the key features of violence included retribution against MDC supporters who testified in the many MDC election petitions that were brought before the High Court. There was also systematic use of state violence drawing upon war veterans and CIO with beatings of MDC supporters in the presence of senior party figures such as Elliot Manyika. A reign of terror by 'Border Gezi' national service graduates was reported in Harare's high-density suburbs. In addition, there was increased use of abduction and extra-judicial execution as the murders of Trymore Midzi of MDC and Cain Nkala exemplified, as well as perfection of torture methods with the spread of the *falanga*, hooding and suffocation, and sexual torture. ZANU-PF perpetrators of violence continued to enjoy impunity.

In 2002, inter-party violence, mainly orchestrated by ZANU-PF, proliferated because of the presidential election of that year. There was a marked upsurge in the number of bases set for use by militia and war veterans for mobilization and torture as well as use of gang rape as a political weapon against opposition supporters. Amongst other specific actions against the opposition were reported evictions of MDC supporters from their urban houses to make way for ZANU-PF supporters or their bases, targeting of violence at MDC polling agents and their displacement from areas of residence, and systematic terror against MDC local council candidates leading to their withdrawal from elections. Other aspects of violence were disenfranchisement of opposition supporters through destruction of their identity documents. In addition, food came to be increasingly used as a political weapon while 'protection money' was demanded from MDC vendors in the Mbare suburb of Harare (ZHR NGO Forum, various issues, 2003).

In 2003, there was an upsurge in inter-party violence during by-elections with abductions, detentions and torture being more widespread than before. The use

of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) as a repressive legal instrument to harass and arrest opposition and CSO activists grew in frequency. Using maximum force, there was systematic crushing of marches by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and WOZA while close co-ordination of repression using repressive activities by police and army, CIO and militia was evident in the blocking of the Final Push campaign in June 2003. Shadowy militia groups like Chipangano surfaced in the Mbare suburb of Harare. An upsurge in cases of rape against MDC women activists and supporters continued. There were also reported instances of the barring of MDC candidates from entering Nomination Courts to file for election contests. In 2004, there was a marked trend towards police raids on MDC offices and homes ostensibly to paralyze the party. The murder of MDC activists was aimed at inducing a climate of fear. As we see below, targeted violence was also directed at CSOs with beatings having become more brutal; the militia targeted student leaders in particular.

Inter-party violence continued unabated between 2005 and 2007. For instance, there was eviction and displacement of MDC supporters in some areas in the build-up to the 2005 election. Harassment of opposition supporters included demands to produce ZANU-PF cards and bellicose threats from leaders such as Saviour Kasukuwere to get rid of MDC 'filth' (ZHR NGO Forum, May 2005:1). In 2007, state paranoia reached new heights with the arrest of alleged coup plotters as well as brutal beatings and torture of MDC leaders. Repeated raids were carried out on MDC offices, including its Harvest House headquarters, ostensibly in search of literature and weapons. Finally, there was a new trend towards abductions by state agents in unmarked vehicles with activists then dumped outside the main cities, after beatings.

A new element in inter-party violence during this phase was the conflict between the two wings of MDC, namely MDC-T and MDC-M. This conflict began with the party split in 2005 but it continued to rear an ugly head during the next two years. In Chapter 2, we observed that clashes between the two parties occurred in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru and Mutare. While the clashes were not as ferocious and deadly as those between ZANU-PF and other parties, they nevertheless remained disturbing.

Another significant feature of inter-party violence during 2000 to 2008 was a trend towards counter-violence to ZANU-PF and state violence. The counter-violence was basically retaliatory violence but it was on a relatively small and unsystematic scale. In 2002, there was retaliatory violence aimed at Joseph Mwale who had been implicated in the murder of Chiminya and Mabika of MDC in the

2000 election campaign. Mwale's house in Ngangu village in Chimanimani was the target of a petrol bomb attack (ZHR NGO Forum, April 2002). Mwale was unhurt. In the same year, there was a report of a gang rape by MDC youths in the Graniteside area of Harare; the woman was subsequently hospitalized. In 2003, there were reports of MDC youths chanting their party's slogans as well as indiscriminately intimidating and assaulting civilians in high-density suburbs of Kuwadzana, Budiro and Glen View in Harare (ZHR NGO Forum, May 2003). Later in that year, MDC youths arrived at a shopping centre singing and chanting slogans and forced patrons in a bar to chant the slogans (Ibid., November 2003). In another incident, MDC youths assaulted four police officers at a bar in Msasa area of Harare and fled after stealing money from that bar (Ibid., June 2004). Also later in the year, 15 MDC youths reportedly assaulted a ZANU-PF official who wore a Women's League T-shirt while another group attacked a group of ZANU-PF supporters led by Pamela Tungamirai in Mabvuku (Ibid. October 2004).

Following the general election in 2005, the MDC held a demonstration that became violent resulting in shops and other property being destroyed (Ibid., April 2005). In 2006, 300 MDC supporters reportedly went on a rampage destroying a house in Glen View belonging to a ZANU-PF woman supporter who had been visited by a man wearing a ZANU-PF T-shirt (Ibid., April 2006). Cases of counter-violence by MDC supporters continued in 2007 and 2008 although they remained limited in scale. In February, some MDC supporters assaulted police officers in Ximex mall in Harare. There were reports of the formation of Democratic Resistance Committees (DRCs) in 2007 by the MDC. These were essentially local self-defence bodies ostensibly formed to protect MDC members from attacks by ZANU-PF and state-linked agencies.

In sum, inter-party violence was overwhelmingly one-sided. The phalanx of forces ranged against the MDC was formidable in that ZANU-PF co-ordinated its violence with various state agencies. The violence resulted in loss of life and injury of persons on a far greater scale than the violence perpetrated by the MDC. The latter was largely amateurish and limited in scale and mainly carried out by its youth members. However, the disturbing features of the counter-violence were imitation of ZANU-PF methods of forcing people to chant party slogans, attacking members of the public wearing party T-shirts and gang-raping of political opponents. Through adoption of ZANU-PF methods of violence, MDC youth were succumbing to a process of (for lack of an appropriate term) *zanufication*.

Intra-party Violence in 2000-2008

As we observed in Chapter 2, internal struggles in parties have spiralled into violence in the history of party politics in Zimbabwe. Intra-party violence in the period 2000-2008 is therefore not something new. We saw how the violence within the MDC contributed to a split into two parties in October 2005 thus weakening it *vis-a-vis* ZANU-PF. The origins of that intra-party violence have not been fully publicly accounted for by the party leadership but there have been several accounts to explain how the violence evolved (Raftopoulos, 2006; Le Bas, 2005). The organizational response to the deepening repression had been the creation of a parallel structure within the MDC. However, the activities of this structure not only resulted in major problems of violence and accountability in party structures, but became the central site of struggle for the control of the party between its president and secretary general.

The first major sign of the problems that were ignited by this parallel structure was the violence that occurred at the MDC headquarters in 2004. This structure had been formed 'as part of the mass action' campaign in 2003 but over time it became what was allegedly termed 'a source of force or militia for use in party struggles by unscrupulous politicians'. There were further outbreaks of intra-party violence in 2005 in spite of several party commissions set up to resolve the issues that caused it in the first place (Ibid.). The youth were the major actors mobilized by a section of the party leadership to unleash violence against opponents. As in ZANU-PF, it is significant that much of the violence was caused by the youth under the direction of certain figures in the party leadership.

Although it was a disturbing development, this intra-party violence never reached the same scale as that unleashed by ZANU-PF against MDC. Furthermore, although inexcusable, this emergent 'culture of violence' in MDC could not be dissociated from the wider context of political violence as orchestrated by ZANU-PF.

Although in the period after the split in 2005 there was a noticeable decrease in intra-party political violence, skirmishes continued within the two faction-driven parties now organized under respective umbrellas of MDC-T and MDC-M. In-fighting sometimes flared up during party primary elections. One contemporary report explained that:

intra-party violence broke out at Harvest House. It follows clashes between MDC supporters loyal to ousted Women Assembly's Chair, Lucia Matibenga and those in support of her replacement,

Theresa Makone. A group of women besieged Harvest House demanding an audience with Tsvangirai whom they challenged to explain why Matibenga was ousted... (ZHR NGO Forum, November 2007:1).

This was an example of a serious clash; in that particular one, seven people were assaulted. On previous occasions, party factional clashes had occurred in Masvingo, Mutare and Chitungwiza. In general, however, this intra-party violence was of a mild, unsystematic and sporadic character. While it could be contained, the danger nonetheless remained that it could spiral out of control, and the impunity of perpetrators was a dangerous development.

Similarly, intra-party violence in ZANU-PF was not as ferocious as that directed at opposition parties. However, some of it was serious enough to warrant appointment of a ZRP Board of Enquiry. This was the case in the aftermath of violence in Makoni in eastern Zimbabwe in 2004. The task of the Board was to investigate violence between supporters of Didymus Mutasa and those of James Kaunye, his opponent in a ZANU-PF primary election contest in Makoni North. Kaunye himself was stripped and assaulted while 42 people were arrested for violence (ZHR NGO Forum, August 2004). In this instance, it was observed that instigators of violence often used youths as 'foot soldiers' who were later prosecuted for perpetrating violence while instigators themselves were not held accountable for their involvement (Ibid.). In another instance of violence, a former governor of Masvingo, Josiah Hungwe and other ZANU-PF members were injured in a skirmish between two factions during Masvingo provincial party elections (ZHR NGO Forum, April 2007). Party leaders at that meeting were attacked with stones by delegates. Earlier, there had also been skirmishes between ZANU-PF supporters and war veterans in an incident in Gweru in 2004. Youth supporters of ZANU-PF destroyed offices belonging to war veterans in protest at non-availability of food hand-outs that they had been promised in exchange for their demonstration against Roy Bennett, an MDC official (ZHR NGO Forum, May 2004).

In one case of violence, four youths mistaken for MDC, were abducted and severely assaulted by CIO agents in Bulawayo. The ZANU-PF youths suffered broken bones and serious injuries to their genitals in that case of intra-party violence (Ibid., September 2004). Finally, an incident in Chegutu in 2005 epitomized a clash between ZANU-PF activists and state authorities over exercise of power following one political incident. In that particular incident, 31 ZANU-PF youths destroyed property, assaulted

members of the public, overran a police base and stabbed a police officer in retaliation for the arrest of one of the youths (Ibid., February 2005).

These patterns and examples of inter-party and intra-party violence demonstrate the spread of a cancer of violence that profoundly affects the content of Zimbabwe's political culture. To a greater degree, ZANU-PF was a major player and strategist, but MDC was to a limited degree also now imbibing this culture to the detriment of its original democratic ethos and practice (Alexander and Tendi, 2008; Interview with N.L., February 2010).

Violence and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in 2000 - 2008

Most accounts of political violence tend to lump CSOs and opposition parties as being primarily the victims of ZANU-PF and state agencies. While this is largely true, there is need to distinguish the specific forms of violence directed at CSOs. Since 2000, most of the violence has been targeted at labour unions, professional groups, mainly teachers, and students. Their national organizations, namely the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) and the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU) have been the principal targets of state repression. Other groups that have attracted the wrath of the authoritarian state are independent media journalists, residents' associations, churches, as well as pressure groups like the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA). Due to their vocal opposition to state repression as well as periodic marches, leaders and members of these pressure groups have been targets of institutionalized violence. More generally, NGOs that are involved in governance and human rights campaigns have been placed under surveillance, harassment, and their personnel detained or subjected to violence. This demonstrates that opposition parties were not the only targets of repression but the broader civil society as well. In particular, the solidarity between CSOs and parties like MDC evoked the special ire of the state and ZANU-PF. In this section, we therefore explore the specific forms of violence that have been directed at them, and the significance of the conjunctures at which this occurred.

Labour

There was little love lost between the authoritarian state and the increasingly assertive labour movement, from the late 1980s. Punitive steps taken against the labour movement included the detention of Morgan Tsvangirai in 1989 for several

weeks. He was then assaulted by suspected war veterans in December 1997 for successfully organizing a national General Strike that year. His assailants were never apprehended and brought to justice, encouraging suspicion that they had acted in cahoots with state agents. There was a more sustained campaign against the ZCTU from 1999 with the formation of the MDC. First, there were incidents in which state violence was directed at unions and workers protesting at working conditions. For example, in 2001, two workers were shot dead and 22 injured by gunshot, tear gas and beatings from the police when 4,000 workers went on strike at the ZISCO steel company at Redcliff. In 2009, police would similarly use disproportionate force against striking workers at Shabani Mine in the Midlands province. Against workers protesting non-payment of salaries, police brandished tear gas canisters and AK-47 rifles, and ordered workers to disperse. Some workers sustained injuries from gunshots and tear gas.

The most detailed assessment of the violence directed at labour was made by an International Labour Organisation (ILO) Commission of Enquiry, which gathered first-hand evidence in 2009 and produced a comprehensive report in the same year. The conclusion of the Commission's report was that:

There was a systematic, even systemic, violation of ILO Conventions such as freedom of association and a clear pattern of arrests, detention and torture of labour leaders and members by security forces coinciding with ZCTU nationwide events, indicating some centralized direction to take such action and a clear pattern of control of ZCTU gatherings through the application of POSA (ILO, 2009).

Furthermore, the Commission observed a systematic targeting of ZCTU officials and members, particularly in rural areas, involving significant violence and anti-union discrimination in employment, in what appeared to be a calculated attempt to intimidate and threaten ZCTU members. Particular concern was expressed about the routine use of police and army against strikes, widespread interference in union affairs and the failure to guarantee judicial independence and the rule of law, resulting in a situation of impunity for those perpetrating atrocities (Ibid.).

The culmination of state repression against labour was the brutal torture directed at its leadership in September 2006. During a peaceful protest against poverty and high taxes, a large number of labour unionists were arrested, detained and assaulted in nine locations throughout the country. Torture was applied to male and female leaders at Matapi police station in Harare. It was so severe that they required hospital treatment as one of the leaders explained (see Box 8 below).

Box 8:**Torture of a labour leader, 2006**

On marching from Construction House, where some labour unions rent some offices, we were arrested immediately and driven to Matapi police station. But the police did not tell us about what was going to happen. We were then separated from each other. We later heard noise of being beaten and initially we thought it might have been thieves.

Then they started beating us in pairs with sticks. For the first time in my life, I saw that you could sweat from being beaten. I then lost consciousness from the beatings. Two young officers beat me again after I had revived. I was forced to lie down, and they stepped on my neck as they continued with the beating... I could not see more than 3 metres away. I could hardly move let alone walk or hear.

I then felt very thirsty. I was ordered to go to another side of the station despite my intense pain. Meanwhile my colleague's head was cut from the beating. My backside was very painful and I could hardly turn my body... For 48 hours, they did not allow lawyers to have access to us, or access to medication.

I have never been beaten like this in my life...

Source: Field Interviews, February 2010

However, this account of violence against labour would be incomplete if reference is not made to conflicts within the labour movement itself. There were skirmishes between members of the ZCTU and the state-sponsored Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) during this period between 2000 and 2008. There was also violence between members of the Women's Advisory Council of the ZCTU in a power struggle. The chair and secretary of the Council were assaulted by a faction that called for the ousting of the ZCTU leaders, Wellington Chibebe and Lovemore Matongo (ZHR NGO Forum, July 2005). This particular faction was also linked to the state-sponsored ZFTU. However, although this violence did not spread or grow in scale, it was nevertheless a worrying development in the labour movement. Prior to this, disagreements and power struggles had been expressed peacefully and not through violence.

Teachers

In any assessment of political violence in the post-2000 period, the fate of teachers looms large. During elections, teachers became targets of attack and displacement by ZANU-PF and its militia. In fact, the systematic targeting of teachers covered every aspect of their lives and there was collusion between the militia, police, CIO and the government (ILO, 2009). As it was explained:

Stories were recounted of teachers having been flogged in front of their pupils; of teachers having disappeared; women teachers being forced to sit on white-hot stones; of teachers moving away from rural areas out of fear, leaving their possessions; of threats that they would be thrown into crocodile-infested rivers; of schools being closed; of beatings and rapes at schools and abductions from schools; and of at least 6 deaths between May and June 2008... (Ibid., 107).

Particular sanctions were aimed at the leadership of the more militant teachers' organization, the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) led by Raymond Majongwe. For its participation in the 'Save our Education' campaign in 2008, its leaders suffered brutal treatment from ZANU-PF militia. In one incident, the latter abducted nine PTUZ members and subjected them to torture and beatings by a team that used logs and iron bars (Ibid.). Six of the teacher unionists were detained for four days and the other three for seven days. One of the women teachers that were beaten later died, in June 2009, as her health had deteriorated since the beating. The chair and secretary general of PTUZ continued to receive harassment, death threats as well as detention for standing up for teachers' rights. The combination of economic distress and political repression resulted in about 20,000 teachers leaving the profession by 2008. Teachers were distrusted by ZANU-PF and its militia for their political pluralism and enlightenment and revulsion at conditions of authoritarianism and obscurantism. They were viewed as supportive towards MDC and thus 'guilty by association'; hence the ruthless campaign against them.

Students

Like labour and professional groups such as teachers and nurses, students are a major component of civil society in Zimbabwe. They and their organization, the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU), have been objects of ferocious repression from the state. The leadership of ZINASU has been constantly harassed and incarcerated. The period between 2005 and 2008 witnessed an intensification of this repression which included arrests and violence against students and their leadership. For instance, student activists at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ)

were arrested for distributing fliers about deteriorating learning conditions while several were expelled for this activity (ZHR NGO Forum, September 2005). In February 2006, six UZ students were arrested for attempting to meet the university's vice-chancellor to discuss learning and living conditions. At the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Bulawayo, students were arrested for protesting against tuition fee increases (ZHR NGO Forum, February 2006).

At Bindura University, students were arrested and tortured in 2006 for an alleged arson attack on a building. They were subjected to a form of torture called 'drinking whisky':

This involved each student touching the ground with his or her finger and then forced to run in circles around this finger until they felt dizzy and fell down... Students were also forced to walk in a bending posture as if they were going underneath an imaginary fence, wire or line. Students were clapped with open palms and forced to say 'thank you' by police officers... (ZHR NGO Forum, May 2006:8).

Student protests did not abate against arbitrary fee increases, transport and food prices as well as a marked deterioration in learning and living conditions at universities and other tertiary institutions. The state response was to despatch armed riot police to campuses, incarcerate student union leaders, including those of ZINASU, and sometimes to close the university halls of residence, as at UZ in 2007. In one incident during a tear gas attack, a student died. However, this did not put an end to student activism at UZ, NUST, Bindura and Midlands State universities as well as Great Zimbabwe University. State authorities were particularly nervous about the possibility of a link between the students' campaign and residents' associations.

However, violence has also broken out between factions in the student movement. In 2009, there was an outbreak of violence in ZINASU between a faction that supported the constitutional reform process of the inclusive government, and another that opposed it. This conflict spilled over into a disputed election of the leadership which exploded into assaults. Although this violence was not fatal, its significance was that it was a mirror image of the state violence that had been previously directed at students themselves.

Pressure Groups

Some of the most intrepid protests against the Mugabe regime during the period under review were periodically organized by dedicated pressure groups that

fearlessly took to the streets. The groups often met with disproportionate response in the form of violence from the state. Prominent amongst these groups were the NCA which campaigned for an inclusive 'people-driven' constitutional reform process, and WOZA which pressed for better social, economic and political rights for citizens, and gender equality.

Most of the protests of NCA were organized outside Parliament in Harare but sometimes in regional centres like Gweru, Masvingo and Mutare, and those of WOZA mainly in Bulawayo and Harare. There is a great deal of symbolism in staging protests outside Parliament in Harare, and state authorities being acutely aware of this, used strong-arm methods to prevent them. The protests of both NCA and WOZA were initiated in 2003 and grew in frequency between 2005 and 2008. State responses ranged from assaults on marchers by riot police wielding batons and tear gas to detentions and torture. In one particular incident in 2004:

Police disrupted an NCA demonstration outside Parliament and subjected marchers to varying forms of torture. Madhuku and eight others were abducted by police officers. Madhuku was assaulted with baton sticks and clenched fists before they dumped him at a rubbish dump site near the National Sports Stadium... 66 demonstrators were assaulted by the police, and dogs were set upon them at time of arrest... (ZHR NGO Forum, February 2004:9).

It was reported that the NCA leader, Madhuku, was taunted and threatened that 'jeri rakuramba wawa kutoda pfuti chaiyo' literally translated as 'you are no longer afraid of the prison cells, you deserve the gun now' (Ibid.).

There was later an arson attack on Madhuku's house in Harare in a clear signal that he and his family were under threat. Despite the plethora of state measures and violence, the NCA proved resilient. It continued to muster several hundred demonstrators pressing for a new constitution in simultaneous protests in different cities almost every month. In the end, there was an uneasy stalemate between the organization and the state since the latter could not deter the NCA from planning protests. Although state authorities could harass, assault, and detain NCA marchers, they failed to deter them from planning and carrying them out.

Similarly, the state failed to dissuade WOZA from organizing its social protests using Bulawayo as the main base although protests in Harare were also held in the main square outside Parliament. There was an upsurge in those protests in 2005 to 2007. They were staged against a variety of issues including hikes in

school fees, food scarcity and escalating prices, and gender violence. Although WOZA protesters consisted largely of women, state responses were conventional in their concentration on the use of batons and tear gas in the assault of protesters, and also widespread use of detention and torture. In one incident in 2005, WOZA members, who were holding a peaceful prayer vigil in Africa Unity Square in Harare, were assaulted and arrested; some protesters had babies on their backs while others needed hospitalization (ZHR NGO Forum, March 2005). To illustrate the tribulations that some WOZA protesters endured, one report observed that:

Woza demonstrators in Bulawayo were exposed to heavy rains and harsh elements as they were detained in an open police courtyard before being moved to cells. Amongst those incarcerated were 14 infants... In Harare, the police denied women food remarking that they were in a war and therefore should not eat. As a result, many fainted from hunger. One of the cells had to accommodate 38 women including those with children and that they were forced to stand all night long. Some of the women were unable to take medication because they had no food... (ZHR NGO Forum, February 2006:5).

Aggressive policing against WOZA nevertheless failed to quell the resilience of this pressure group. Various methods of intimidation used against the leadership of WOZA similarly flopped (Interview with WOZA leaders, March 2010). However, assaults and detentions as well as torture caused trauma amongst members subjected to these.

Media

During the period under review, the independent media (largely made up of newspapers, but also a radio station) were subjected to state-related violence. A watershed event was the torture in 1999 of two senior journalists who worked on *The Standard*. The brutal treatment meted out to Mark Chavunduka and Raymond Choto for a story on alleged dissension in army ranks was widely publicized causing considerable embarrassment to the Mugabe regime. *The Standard* has been consistently critical of state authoritarianism and has exposed many violations of human and political rights.

State heavy-handedness and intolerance towards the critical independent media was underscored by the bombing of the printing press of *The Daily News* in 2001, and its subsequent banning in 2003. The premises of *Radio Voice of the People* (VOP) were bombed in 2003. In both instances of bombing, state authorities did not actively pursue investigations and to date no arrests or investigations have been

made. Legislation introduced in 2002, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (AIPPA), was largely aimed at restricting or hounding the independent media. A number of journalists from this sector were harassed, detained or tortured for stories critical towards the regime (Interview with N.T., May 2010). For instance, a cameraman who filmed the torture of key political and civic leaders in March 2007 was found murdered a few days later outside Harare. Intolerance towards the independent media was extended to harassment of newspaper vendors by ZANU-PF militia with beatings and confiscation of copies reported over the years. In sum, an independent media has largely been viewed as a threat to the hegemony of the state in the propagation of news, information and commentary.

NGOs and the Churches

This discussion on the pervasive impact of violence on civil society would be incomplete without reference to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Churches in Zimbabwe. How have they been affected by political violence during the period under review? Clearly, they have not been immune from the climate of authoritarian repression. It is NGOs involved in human rights and governance which have been the main targets of state surveillance, harassment and punitive measures such as detention and torture. For instance, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) has largely engaged in gathering material relating to human rights abuses and politicized food distribution at local levels. In 2008, most of their evidence pointed to state involvement and collusion in political violence. Presumably as a punitive measure, its Director, Jestina Mukoko and other senior officials were abducted in November 2008 and subjected to severe, prolonged torture while in detention. This case was widely publicized causing acute discomfort on the part of the regime.

Other key NGOs whose staff has received harassment and detention include the election monitoring body, Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), some of whose monitors were killed or displaced during the 2008 run-off election. The National Association of NGOs (NANGO) had some of their officials detained on spurious charges concocted by state authorities. In addition, provisions of the NGO Bill of 2004 contained threats of the cutting of external funding for NGOs involved in human rights and governance work.

Finally, although churches have traditionally spoken out against repression, there have emerged divisions within some Zimbabwean churches regarding their attitudes towards the Mugabe regime. Some church leaders such as Bishop

Norbert Kunonga have expressed support for the regime. In the Anglican Church, to which Bishop Kunonga originally belonged, there was a major split caused by his endorsement of the regime. Following his excommunication from the Anglican Church of Province of Central Africa (CPCA), Kunonga resisted an order to return assets of the Church, and to cede use of church buildings to the CPCA. This resistance has sparked conflict between the church led by Kunonga and that led by Bishop Gandiya. This conflict has exploded into violence between members of the two churches as they fought over where and when to worship in existing church buildings in Harare. State authorities and police seem to have sided with the Kunonga faction for political reasons. In sum, violence has been imported into the church with state backing for one of the factions (*The Zimbabwean*, 1 April 2010; *The Standard*, 18 April 2010). Traditional methods of conciliation have been discarded for the use of physical force and violence in dealing with this matter.

Violence against Women

A crucial indicator of the state of civil society is the treatment of women and the level of their participation in politics and governance. State authoritarianism has blocked most forms of democratic participation including that of women's organizations and activists operating in the governance, human and gender rights sector. During the period under review, women activists and members of opposition parties and CSOs have not been spared brutal repression in the form of violence. The danger of beatings, rape and torture for these categories increases exponentially during election periods. For example, an analysis of the violence in the 2008 election run-off showed that a woman who was an MDC member, or merely perceived to be a supporter of the MDC, was ten times more likely to report a human rights violation than a female member of ZANU-PF (CSV, 2009). Another report described 448 cases of violations against women, and established that between 2000 and 2006 the most common violation reported by women was assault followed by political intimidation and property destruction (ZHR NGO Forum, 2006). Observing that there were a number of differences in patterns of violence between urban and rural women, it was pointed out that:

Rural women were reported to have experienced property destruction, displacement, rape, torture, more frequently than their urban counterparts, while urban women reported assault, unlawful detention, and death threats more frequently (Ibid., 16).

A report released in 2009 on violence against women involved in NCA campaigns noted that the alleged perpetrators involved in violations against women were

ZANU-PF supporters in 80 per cent of the cases (RAU, 2009). If ZANU-PF youths were added to this total, members of ZANU-PF allegedly responsible became 86 per cent, while the police were the next most frequent category of alleged perpetrators at 11 per cent, followed by war veterans at 8 per cent (Ibid.).



Yet another study carried out on Zimbabwean women victims living amongst the refugee population in South Africa yielded equally worrying findings. It observed that assault was the most common form of physical abuse followed by others such as sensory over-stimulation, burnings, *falanga* and electric shock (CSV, 2006). Finally, of a sample of 1983 WOZA members, 42 per cent reported assault, 33 per cent reported physical torture while 64 per cent cited humiliating and degrading treatment, and 78 per cent mentioned political threats (WOZA, 2007; 2008). These violations mostly occurred during their peaceful protests, but others took place in police custody. The research on violence against WOZA members established that the police were the most frequent perpetrators (43 per cent), with war veterans (19 per cent), and youth militia (10 per cent) also involved (Ibid.).

Moreover, it is a matter of concern that little is accurately known about the prevalence of politically-related rape and sexual abuse amongst women. Despite considerable anecdotal reporting of rape and sexual abuse since 2000, there has been little systematic documentation (RAU, 2009). Part of the explanation relates to fear and shame as well as complication of the stigma of HIV-AIDS. However, about 14 per cent of sampled WOZA reported sexual abuse such as forcing women to remove their underwear while in custody (WOZA, 2008).

Other studies confirm the increase in politically motivated violence against women; for instance, of the 414 victims of violence between March and May 2007, some 24 per cent were women (SPT, 2007). Some of the activists who received brutal beatings in September 2006 after the arrest of ZCTU leaders were women as were those tortured during the 'Save Zimbabwe' campaign of March 2007. Some of the long-term effects of the trauma of violence experienced were

described by Sekai Holland, a senior woman politician in MDC-T:

I experienced fearfulness and insomnia. I had to sleep with the buzzer beside my head. I had symptoms of numbing, insomnia and hyper-arousal. I know I should be angry and scared but I can't feel anything (Holland quoted in OSISA, OSI and Bellevue/NYU, 2007:17; also Holland's presentation at SAPEs, March 2010).

A sinister development is the use of the weapon of rape against women political opponents. There have been reported cases of opposition women supporters being raped for having voted for a party of their choice.

Examples:

Two MDC youths were abducted and gang-raped at Zanu PF bases at Mbizo in Kwekwe (ZHR, Feb. 2002);

A Bulawayo woman was gang-raped for voting MDC by National Youth Service youth in uniform (ZHR, March 2002);

A woman was gang-raped by MDC youth in Graniteside, Harare (ZHR, March 2002);

Eight farm settlers at Kimcote farm in Mash West were axed and four of them raped. Some had their eyes plucked out and sockets stuffed with mealie meal. Victims had been warned that they would be dealt as 'mushrooms' (ZHR April 2005).

Finally, it is important to know that some of the rape and sexual abuse against women is revenge for participation in politics or campaigns by members of the victim's family. About 56 per cent of a sample of NCA women members stated that they had been abused because a member of their family was involved in politics (RAU, 2009). Thus women 'can become victims both due to their own involvement, but also because of others, and, in the latter case, they are victimised in order to put pressure on family members' (Ibid.). The latter trend was particularly marked during the 2008 run-off election.

A publication by an NGO has provided useful profiles of women activists who have experienced the trauma of violence in the form of rape (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 2010). In unrelenting detail, it describes gang-rape by soldiers and other agents against women activists in opposition parties and in CSOs. Women are particularly vulnerable in situations of political violence. They are physically weaker, a condition that state agents, militia and party youth take advantage of.

Effects of Violence on Political Culture

This chapter opened with the question of what have been the effects of violence on Zimbabwe's political culture. Here by 'political culture' we refer to attitudes and orientations of citizens towards politics, perceptions of political legitimacy, traditions of political practice and civic participation, expectations about accountability of elected officials and delivery of state institutions as well as views towards justice and rule of law. A more pointed definition is that 'political culture is the system of beliefs about patterns of political interaction and political institutions' (Verba, 1965, quoted in Masunungure, 2000). Political culture encompasses all politically relevant orientations whether of a cognitive, evaluative or expressive kind. It is not a monolithic entity but has within itself considerable scope for the emergence, development and persistence of political sub-cultures (Masunungure, 2000). Often these sub-cultures are founded on more persistent historical cleavages such as race, class, ethnic or regional distinctions, and these give each country's politics its special flavour.

Concerning Zimbabwe, the bulk of this study has described and assessed patterns of political violence and established its centrality in the political process. It has been argued that violence has been part and parcel of political competition and power struggles for more than 50 years. As a consequence of the threads of violence woven into nationalist and liberation politics as well as post-independence election processes, it could also be argued that violence is part of the psyche of most Zimbabweans. Yet there is no general *acceptance* of violence as a method and instrument of political competition. Thus although it has been a major factor in politics, especially during elections, it has not been internalized as a legitimate activity and an instrument in competing for power or resolving differences in society. When certain political parties and state agencies have deployed violence, this has not been accepted by the broad society. As a political instrument, violence has thus been wielded 'on the sufferance' of most Zimbabweans. Courts of law have not sanctioned violence by and large. The explanation for its recurrence and pervasiveness for the past half century is that some state institutions in conjunction with ruling parties have engaged in violence and enjoyed impunity for this.

Let us see how Zimbabweans view the issue of political violence, by drawing on a survey conducted in 2009 (MPOI and Freedom House, 2009). Most of those sampled agreed with the statement that 'the use of violence is never justified in Zimbabwean politics'. Eight-five per cent of MDC members and 80 per cent of

ZANU-PF members endorsed this sentiment (Ibid.). The same survey established that a significant proportion of the sample had experienced intimidation and violence directly. Some 35 per cent had experienced threats, harassment or intimidation while 12 per cent had sustained physical assault, sexual assault or torture (Ibid.). Furthermore, about 22 per cent of the sample had family members who had experienced politically motivated personal injury in the form of physical or sexual assault or torture. There was a relatively high proportion of MDC members (57 per cent) who had experienced intimidation compared to ZANU-PF members (25 per cent) (Ibid.). Similarly about 67 per cent of MDC members and 39 per cent of ZANU-PF members expressed fear of intimidation during elections. Indeed, 60 per cent of the whole sample experienced intimidation during elections. These findings are scarcely surprising in the light of the narrative and analysis in Chapters 1 to 3. They reinforce the view that violence has had negative and unhealthy effects on the election process and on people’s attitudes towards this particular aspect of the political process.

Table 3: Freeness and fairness of elections 1999-2003

	1999	2005
	%	%
<i>Completely free and fair</i>	16	19
<i>Free and fair but with minor problems</i>	15	16
<i>Free and fair but with major problems</i>	21	19
<i>Not free and fair</i>	26	39
<i>Don't know</i>	22	6

Source: Afrobarometer, 2005:9

Table 4: Expectations about freeness and fairness of future elections

<i>Not free and fair</i>	17%
<i>Hardly free and fair with major problems</i>	18%
<i>Free and fair with minor problems</i>	29%
<i>Completely free and fair</i>	24%
<i>Don't know</i>	12%

Source: MPOI and Freedom House, 2009:27

This catalogue of violence has sown not only a tremendous amount of fear but distrust towards the political system. This can be traced over the years as periodic surveys have been carried out on public attitudes towards governance in Zimbabwe. One survey found that 71 per cent of their respondents felt that some members of their community felt frightened by ZANU-PF, an opinion shared by 30 per cent of ZANU-PF loyalists themselves (Suzman Foundation, 2000). There was fear about participating in demonstrations with 61 per cent of the sample stating that they would be worried about joining a demonstration or protest (Ibid.). This same survey recorded low levels of trust in the government. No less than 43 per cent of the sample stated that they had very little or no confidence in the government, and a further 25 per cent said that they did not have much confidence that what the government was telling them was the truth (Ibid.). Just 40 per cent of one sample placed confidence in information disseminated by the state broadcaster, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) (Bratton et al., 2005).

The economic crisis of the decade beginning in 2000 compounded the regressive authoritarianism and significantly undermined what remained of the social contract between Zimbabwean citizens and their state. As an Afrobarometer survey observed, deprivations were most widely felt in Zimbabwe where 75 per cent thought they were personally disadvantaged, and where 50 per cent thought their group lagged behind (Bratton et al. 2005). The findings portrayed a Zimbabwean population that was shell-shocked by rapid contractions in living standards and where gross economic disparities had opened up between ordinary people and privileged party elites. Generally, it was found that support for democracy rested upon mass satisfaction with a range of past, present and future economic conditions. Economic satisfaction was negatively related to preferences for authoritarian alternatives particularly one-person rule; citizens who are economically distressed, as in Zimbabwe, were strong opponents of dictatorship (Ibid.).

Other key indicators of a political culture relate to levels of trust or confidence in institutions of governance as well as those that administer the electoral system. On the whole, as we saw above, there is little public confidence in most state institutions in Zimbabwe. For example, just 34 per cent of Zimbabweans approved of the performance of local government councillors while only 19 per cent were happy with their Members of Parliament (MPs) (Ibid.). This survey conducted before the formation of an inclusive government in 2009 was interpreted as Zimbabweans' reaction against the heavy-handed style of repression practised

by ZANU-PF officials, which included pressure to vote for the then ruling party and sanctions for failing to carry a party card. Indeed, citizens prefer 'informal contacts' or channels to receive service or to be heard, as most of them have given up trying to work through public officials.

Against the background of violence and manipulation of the electoral system discussed in Chapters 1 to 3, it is scarcely surprising that there is very little trust in the electoral process. Most Zimbabweans seem disillusioned with the electoral system. We have already observed the significant levels of fear and concern about intimidation. More than 66 per cent of a sample did not trust the national election administration in the 2005 election (MPOI and Afrobarometer, 2005). Following the 2008 long delay in announcement of the first round of presidential election results, public confidence in the electoral process plummeted further.

Actual participation in the voting process in Zimbabwe appears to have steadily declined over the years. What appears to be a trend of withdrawal in some African countries seems to apply to Zimbabwe as well:

Popular involvement in electoral campaigns does not cohere with voting. In other words, many Africans who attend party rallies, and even those who say that they 'work' for a candidate or party, do not later cast a ballot. Perhaps when joining in political campaigns, these participants have motives other than voting. Maybe they wish to gain access to handouts (food, clothing or money) distributed by candidates intent on buying votes... (Bratton et al. 2005:264).

There is a reasonable amount of evidence to suggest that the practice of vote buying or bribing is prevalent in the Zimbabwean electoral process. Although ZANU-PF commands greater resources including state resources during election campaigns, this has not necessarily translated into votes. In the 2008 election campaign, large rallies for ZANU-PF turned out to be misleading as a barometer of the direction in which the voting would go.

There has been no upward increase in the number of voters who cast their votes between 1980 and 2008. Astonishingly, the number of ballots cast in 1980 and 2008 are almost the same despite a significant increase in population size. Some 2.64 million votes were cast in 1980 and 2.53 million in the 2008 election (Sithole, 1986; Booysen and Toulou, 2009). What is also revealing is the increase in the proportion of spoilt ballot papers during the 28-year period: they increase from 1.99 per cent in the 1980 election to 5.23 per cent in the 2008 run off election.

This suggests both contraction in the proportion of eligible population participating in voting, and deliberate spoliation of the voting process through frustration with the unfairness and opaqueness of the process. This is a negative dimension of Zimbabwe's political culture, one of the cumulative aspects of the violence and manipulation of the electoral system.

Table 5: Decline in voter participation, 1980-2008

Year	Registered voters	Voter turn-out	% of reg. voters
1980	2,7 m	2,7 m	93
2000	5,0 m	2,5 m	50
2002	5,6 m	3,0 m	53
2005	5,6 m	2,6 m	47
2008	5,9m	2,5 m	42

Source: ZHDR:, 2000:65; Booysen and Toulou, 2009:647

As we observed in previous chapters, most elements in ZANU-PF, including Robert Mugabe and the uniformed forces, subscribe to a militaristic political sub-culture. Although they have organized elections periodically, this is largely for lip-service purposes: they have no commitment to a democratic system and values. They respect election outcomes only if they win in the elections. Otherwise, their position is neatly summed up by a widely quoted statement (see Chapter 3) rehearsed by Mugabe himself: *'should one just write an X and then the country goes like that?'* As we argued in Chapter 1, the persistence of a commandist political sub-culture should be explained in terms of the effect of the liberation war which had a deep socio-psychological impact on the participants. This socio-psychology of terror, fear and death permeated the fabric of life wherever this warfare touched. The sub-culture of intolerance, intimidation and contempt for fair elections was reproduced in the post-independence period. (Masunungure, 2000). It was this historical background and experience that instilled in many of the political-cum-military leaders and their supporters a militaristic conception of politics and political processes.

Perhaps it would be useful to link the discussion on the effects of violence on political culture to the relatively low level of social capital in Zimbabwean society.

One indicator of this is the low level of trust and high level of suspicion among Zimbabweans themselves. While Zimbabwe is a politically active society in terms of discussing public affairs, even passionately, the circles in which this occurs are narrow. For example, in one survey, respondents were asked which political party they supported; about 66 per cent of them refused to reveal their affiliation (Ibid.). Most Zimbabweans felt somewhat unsafe or that it was inadvisable to disclose their party affiliation. In sum:

Adult citizens of Zimbabwe are well informed, they have a propensity to discuss politics (the palaver tradition) but not publicly (the closet mindset), they are negatively oriented both to output political processes and the electoral aspects of the polis, feel largely constrained in discussing politics and yet despite these negatives, they express strong normative preference as an active participant... (Ibid., 36).



The data on which these observations and conclusions were based indicated that Zimbabweans exhibit high frequencies of distrustfulness of their fellow political actors and even higher frequencies of distrustfulness in dealings with fellow members of their polity. The prevalence of suspicion, mistrust and anxiety undermines the sense of confidence in others in the polity, and this in turn undermines the base on which democracy can be built, developed and sustained.

However, the encouraging trends relate to Zimbabweans' attitudes towards democracy as a political system. Findings from a 2005 survey showed that support for democracy was unambiguous among Zimbabweans with two-thirds of those sampled stating that 'democracy is preferable to any other

kind of government' (Bratton et al., 2005). Support for concrete democratic institutions was also manifested in a preference for a multiparty system to articulate and aggregate the demands and interests of the populace. Seventy-six per cent of those sampled agreed that 'many political parties are needed to

make sure that people have real choices in who governs them' (Ibid.). The supremacy of parliament over the executive in the crafting of laws for the country was endorsed by 77 per cent of the sample. The rejection of one-party rule was now 'universal' in the Zimbabwean political cosmos. These attitudes are an important dimension of Zimbabwe's political culture as embedded in values that yearn for democratization. Most citizens of Zimbabwe continue to be democratic aspirants despite the present regime of authoritarianism supported by a militaristic political sub-culture that continues to be challenged at various levels including through the electoral process itself.

Chapter 5

Wider Impact of Political Violence on Society



Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the wider impact of political violence on Zimbabwean society. We have already observed that the foundations of violence as a method and instrument in the pursuit and defence of power in Zimbabwean politics were laid over 50 years ago. Prior to that, colonial state violence was a key instrument in the maintenance

of white minority rule. However, we also noticed that there were qualitative differences in the *type* and *scale* of violence utilised in the periods before the 1960s and afterwards during the 1970s as well as in the post-independence period itself. The violence of the Gukurahundi period together with that from 2000 onwards was of a different scale and mode of ferocity. It has been variously described as the epitome of 'madness' and 'bad things' by those who run the Zimbabwe state (ILO, 2009:152). Both periods have bequeathed painful legacies of trauma, fear and withdrawal by the communities that witnessed the excesses but also the wider society that was informed about them.

Violence, Trauma and Fear

In particular, the wounds inflicted on communities in Matabeleland North and South as well as parts of Midlands remain unhealed. Painful memories of the ferocious violence described in Chapter 2 linger on. As the major report which assembled many eyewitness accounts on the Gukurahundi era explained, there is a great deal that will need to be done before some healing begins:

Thousands of interviews revealed that there is still deep rooted fear, anger and distrust at grassroots of society. The Unity Accord brought a superficial peace but has not dealt with these innermost emotions... The conflict that happened was never resolved satisfactorily and the results were horrific. Accordingly for very practical reasons, it is vitally important to deal with the emotions of people now before they fester and a monster is created which cannot be controlled in future... Many of the wounds are festering and need sunlight and treatment if they are to heal... (CCJPZ and LRF, 1997:209).

The distinctive dimension of the Gukurahundi violence was the relatively high number of casualties especially the killings estimated at between 10, 000 and

20,000. This is an enormous number of casualties in a population of about 12 million. The total of those affected directly or indirectly by the violence, those who were injured, beaten, subjected to mass psychological torture through forced attendance at *pungwes*, and the families who lost loved ones would run into hundreds of thousands. This is a significant proportion of the population. The social and psychological impact on those who witnessed the violence will be permanent for many. Trauma and fear remain widespread in the affected communities. In the absence of systematic and extensive clinical studies, it is not possible to estimate the population affected by fear, stress and common mental diseases that are generated in situations of violence on the scale of Gukurahundi.

Although the scale of violence between 2000 and 2008 was on a different level to the extent that fewer than 1,000 were identified as killed in political violence, the size of the population that witnessed it was large. Most of the killings were strategic in that they were directed at opposition politicians especially middle-level party organizers in both urban and rural areas. In a sense, the violence was not random. In Chapters 3 and 4, we alluded to co-ordination between the then ruling party, the militia, war veterans and state organs including the police, intelligence and the military. Like the Gukurahundi period of violence, the violence between 2000 and 2008 was calculated and co-ordinated to induce the maximum amount of fear and trauma, as well as paralysis amongst both the opposition movement and the wider population. It was notable that this violence was most intense during the presidential elections of 2002 and 2008. Equally devastating in its impact, especially in terms of trauma, was the military-style Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Restore Order) of 2005, as we saw in Chapter 1. The overall objective of the Operation appears to have been to demobilize and displace the opposition movement and its supporters shortly after the 2005 election. With overtones of a 'once for all' finality in cleaning up urban areas of opposition strongholds, the Operation also had immediate economic and social consequences that shocked the global community prompting the United Nations to send a Special Envoy to investigate. As one report explained:

Operation Murambatsvina has had devastating consequences on the mental health of those affected. It is clear that this is not due to the Operation alone, but that the organized violence and torture of the past 5 years or so has had the cumulative effect seen in the consequences of the Operation. The overall morbidity is enormous conservatively estimated at about 800 000 persons - and reflective of a situation in a 'complex emergency'... It is important here to point out that we are talking about 'clinically significant disorders'; that is, psychological disorders

that ordinarily would require the attention of mental health professionals and that are unlikely to heal without such attention... (ActionAid, CSU, CHRA and ZPP, 2005:39).

Operation *Murambatsvina* acted as a rehearsal for later operations aimed at subduing the opposition movement. The rehearsal witnessed close co-ordination of repression by the police, local authorities, and the Joint Operations Command (JOC), which was believed to be one of the architects of the Operation. The show of force was intended to cow the population to the extent that they were forced to undertake the physical destruction of their own property and outbuildings due to fear of beatings and detention. The compliance with orders was fear-induced and involuntary. But this instigated widespread anguish and trauma which has persisted. It was against this wider background that the peak of institutionalized violence was planned and executed during the presidential run-off campaign in 2008, as we saw in Chapter 3. As it was observed:

The events of 2008 are not an aberration, but the continuation of an approach by the Zimbabwean State to dealing with political challenge, and especially the challenge that accompanies elections, the ultimate challenge to political power. The events of 2008 are thus not unique but rather a more severe example of the events that preceded it... (CSVR, 2009:23).

The above report makes an important additional observation. This relates to what it terms 'command responsibility'. This refers to a situation firstly in which state agents with command responsibility can be shown to have been involved in the perpetration of gross human rights violations, either by being present at such abuses, or by evidence that they issued instructions for the violations to take place (Ibid.). Secondly, since the state has an obligation under the constitution to prevent such abuses, there is evidence that the state or its agents failed to exercise this duty. The first, for obvious reasons, 'is generally very difficult to prove, although plausible allegations can be made, while the second is less difficult because the existence of reports of gross human rights violations should lead the state to take positive steps to investigate and take actions to stop such abuses' (Ibid.).

Somewhat chilling is the widespread but calculated use of torture as an instrument to punish the opposition and cause fear amongst its ranks. We have already alluded to the marked increase in the use of the *falanga*, not only by state agents including the police but also by the militia. Perhaps the peak in the application of torture on political opposition by the state was both in 2007 and 2008. As we saw in Chapter 1, the most symbolic of the torture sessions was the brutal beating of the 'Save

Zimbabwe' campaigners in March 2007. The graphic images of the beatings were broadcast worldwide in a conjuncture in which technology escaped control and filtering by state censorship, as we stated in Chapter 1. The effects of this type of torture included spreading fear, despondency, and abetting demobilization: 'if they could beat the leaders, then who were you the small fry to stand up to the regime' (Interview with B.A., February 2010). The public show of torture aimed at sending 'a message to all ... and there was both fear and revulsion', 'a warning to others' and 'a lesson that authorities can humiliate anybody' (Field Interviews with DA, CR and NW, February 2010). Referring to Morgan Tsvangirai, it was Mugabe who was quoted as stating that 'of course, he was bashed. He deserved it. I told the police to beat him a lot' (Mugabe as quoted on 29 March 2007).



The effects of publicly and privately administered torture were profound. A study carried out by medical professionals shortly after the March 2007 beatings made a number of pertinent observations:

This torture and political violence has devastating physical, psychological and social health consequences. At the time of evaluation, all 24 of Zimbabwean victims ... continued to suffer from substantial and often debilitating physical and psychological symptoms as a direct result of their abuse. Individuals suffered from severe pain, broken bones and unhealed wounds as a result of beatings they had endured. Their backs and legs showed clear marks from whips or imprints of clubs used to beat them. The psychological scars, including depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and associated symptoms such as profound sadness, nervousness, difficulty with sleeping, and recurrent memories of trauma were also evident... (OSISA, OSI and Bellevue/NYU Programme, 2007:3).

Other observations made were that the Zimbabwean authorities delayed access medical services for victims of torture and political violence; and that doctors

assisting the victims were threatened and harassed by police and government authorities (Ibid.). Finally, the study was emphatic that fear was the most common reaction to the widespread violence and torture, and it affected not only the victims but the rest of the community as well. In addition, the fear of communication exacerbated feelings of isolation and depression while limiting the sharing of information that could provide reality-testing and decrease the feelings of 'going crazy' common in post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Ibid.). Worst of all, fear of communication interfered with natural healing processes that take place through talking, sharing stories and speaking out.

Cumulatively, the period between 1982 and 2008 witnessed institutionalized violence that has had far-reaching effects on the psyche and outlook of the Zimbabwean society. Many families and individuals have been directly or indirectly touched by this violence. Recommendations that were made to address both the causes and effects of the violence were ignored or treated with disdain by the ruling elite. The outcome has been a society that muddles through with festering scars that could develop into future conflicts of retribution, thus reinforcing the cycle of violence. But the cycle of violence cannot be broken if the system of impunity of those who perpetrate violence remains.

Effects of Impunity

A large part of the explanation of the cycle of institutionalized violence is to be found in the immunity enjoyed by those who commit it. As we observed, the history of immunity of state agents including the police and military who commit violence against civilians goes back to the 1970s. This has resulted in the perpetrators not being called to account for their actions such as torture, maiming, and murder amongst other activities they take against civilians including members of opposition parties and civil society. Nothing has been as profoundly disillusioning and symbolic as seeing perpetrators remain scot-free and going further to brag that they would not be touched by state authorities. Perpetrators view themselves as part of the state apparatus and 'above the law'.

The laws that conferred immunity on perpetrators were:

- Amnesty Ordinance 3 of 1979,
- Amnesty (General Pardon) Ordinance 12 of 1980,
- Clemency Order of 2000.

These laws have been employed by the state to shield those of its agents and

institutions that commit violence, from being brought to justice. There have been numerous instances in which complainants and victims have sought justice and protection at police stations only to be turned away, ostensibly because their cases were 'political'. In other instances, the victims have been harassed or detained for seeking protection from the militia, war veterans or ZANU-PF supporters. This formal and informal situation of impunity has created tremendous distress for victims who do not belong to state institutions and ZANU-PF. For them, the reality is that the 'rule of law' does not exist. This is the climax of the steady erosion of human and political rights since Independence but also of the immunity that the state has conferred on perpetrators.

One of the more cynical uses of immunity law was the protection conferred on those who committed acts of violence against opposition supporters in the 2000 election. Mugabe's presidential clemency had this effect. As a contemporary report observed:

The impunity imposed in 2000 had serious effects... War veterans and members of ZANU-PF seem to believe that they have the right to infringe on other people's rights without being held responsible or accountable at law. The police now take little action to protect persons against the political violence in the area, and in many cases, even refuse to take statements from MDC supporters. They clearly fail in their duty to protect defenceless people against their aggressors... (ZHR NGO Forum, February 2001:3).

Furthermore, ZANU-PF activists such as Chenjerai Hunzvi and Joseph Chinotimba amongst others were alleged to have been involved in setting up torture bases, but they were never called to account. Similarly, as we saw in an earlier chapter, state agents like Joseph Mwale have enjoyed immunity from prosecution for a decade despite overwhelming evidence that he was implicated in the murder of an MDC activist in 2000. Although a considerable number of perpetrators are known to victims or their families, the latter are powerless to act to receive justice because the system presently prevents this. Many reports by human rights organizations have documented the names and acts of perpetrators. They range from police officers, who have a reputation for administering torture, to state agents, from war veterans and militia members, and from party supporters to members of parliament. Covering the period between 1998 and 2008, this information is in the public domain but no investigations or follow-up actions have been taken against alleged perpetrators (ZHR NGO Forum, various reports; Amani Trust, various reports; HRW, various reports; Amnesty International, various reports). During our fieldwork, we were struck by the pain expressed by some of those who

had experienced violence from certain persons whom they saw enjoying freedom and protection despite the torture they inflicted on them. One of the leading civil society activists stated that he would like to meet his 'two torturers' and find out 'why they did what they did' to him (Interview with N.L., March 2010). It was a similar sentiment expressed by a member of the National Organ for Healing and Reconciliation, Sekai Holland, who was subjected to torture in March 2007 (Address by Holland to a Sapes Trust seminar, April 2010). 'So long as the perpetrators do not own up, acknowledge and explain their actions, there would be no "closure" for those who suffered at their hands' (Interview with S.M., May 2010).

The process of acknowledgement and contrition appears remote as long as the impunity of perpetrators remains intact. This makes some pundits pessimistic about a breakthrough in the absence of a regime change (Ibid.). To other observers, it would be 'very difficult' to address the issue of impunity in the present 'transitional period'. Meanwhile, names of perpetrators continued to pop up in field reports of 2000, 2002 and 2008 on human rights violations due to impunity (Field Interview with M.F., March 2010). Such names include those of youth militia, war veterans and the police. One analyst has cogently summarized the negative effects of state policy of impunity for perpetrators of political violence:

With hindsight, the decision to declare immunity in 1980 can be regarded as a decision made too hastily. It prevented Zimbabweans from learning the real benefits of accountability. The policy of reconciliation did not prevent the violence of the Gukurahundi, nor has it prevented the re-emergence of hate speech, racism and violence today. It would also seem to be the case that having impunity as a precedent encourages its further use, and perhaps even encourages the use of violence as a problem-solving device. It would even seem, in the recent violence, that Zanu PF uses impunity as the final part of its 'campaign' strategy (Reeler, 2004:237).

Unlike in other authoritarian African states, the Mugabe regime has been careful and deliberate in avoiding excessive political killings. The twist in the 2000-2008 period was the predominant use of torture and the minimising of summary executions. Although the world, including the SADC region, failed to understand this and often commented on the comparatively small number of deaths:

There is a terrible learning that has occurred over the decades, and that is that summary executions are not necessary to maintain compliance: this can be done by torture alone. Here we have the strategic aim behind the violence... (Ibid., 238).

In other words, there has been an unconventional but nevertheless effective

approach by the regime in the use of its coercive instruments including impunity. Lengthy jail terms for opposition leaders and widespread executions of opponents have been avoided to pre-empt focal points of resistance as well as damning evidence of repression (Interview with S.T., February 2010). Yet, as we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, the low-intensity terror and torture tactics have been widespread and effective in containing the opposition for a decade without unduly upsetting the international political radar. Nevertheless, there has been growing resistance to that regime of low-intensity terror and repression strategy including economic penalties that accompanied the 2008 election campaign. This is an issue that we examine when we turn our attention below to community pressures for restitution for violence and confiscation.

Restitution or Retribution?

While the Zimbabwe state has been reluctant to address the issue of impunity head on, communities and individuals who were at the receiving end of violence have sometimes taken matters into their own hands. Some have demanded restitution in the form of compensation from perpetrators directly while others have sued the state itself. For instance, following her acquittal, Jestina Mukoko has sued state authorities including ministers responsible for security ministries for her abduction, torture and detention in 2008. Yet others have engaged in acts of retribution in physically revenging attacks on themselves or their family members.

Following the 2008 run-off election violence, a series of developments put the issue of restitution at centre stage. Those communities and individuals who had suffered violence or dispossession saw the advent of an inclusive government to be an opportunity to press for restitution. In several instances, rural communities that had experienced dispossession of their property for political reasons pressed peacefully for their recovery.

In Nyanga in eastern Zimbabwe, one community took repossession of their livestock from ZANU-PF supporters who had confiscated them. In Buhera, a district in eastern Zimbabwe where some of the worst rural political violence was experienced, a community exacted retribution on ZANU-PF members who had inflicted violence on them during the run-off campaign. Some houses were burnt and destroyed during the revenge attacks.

Box 9

Extra-judicial restitution in Buhera, 2010

Drama is unfolding in Buhera where avenging spirits have left Zanu PF activists who murdered people in acts of political violence quaking in their boots. According to detailed accounts from villagers, traditional and political leaders, the spirits are targeting in broad daylight the Zanu PF militia which terrorised supporters of the then opposition party, MDC-T during the past violent elections...

One of those implicated is the late Patrick Basopo, a police constabulary who operated in Buhera during the 2002 presidential election. Basopo stunned the Buhera community this year when he made a public confession about his role in the murder of a school headmaster, Tedious Chokuda, whose death had remained unsolved for almost a decade...

A woman from the Basopo family became possessed with Chokuda's avenging spirit last year and spilled the beans. The woman is alleged to have confronted Basopo's brother and asked him why he killed Chokuda. She also informed Basopo's relatives how, in the dead of the night, members of a ZANU-PF militia allegedly led by Patrick Basopo dragged Chokuda out of the house he was sleeping in and brutally murdered him.

To cover up for the crime, they faked a suicide: tying him with shoelaces and leaving him hanging from a tree. The possessed woman warned that they would not rest until they paid full restitution to the Chokuda family... Chokuda's spirit ordered Patrick to pay 65 herd of cattle....'

Source: *The Standard*, 16 May 2010

For several months, in 2008-09, counter-attacks on ZANU-PF members and re-possession of confiscated property were reported. Widely reported, the retributive attacks threatened to escalate. There was even a case of a 15-year-old boy revenging his father's murder by a war veteran in 2008. He stabbed the war veteran to death in April 2010.

There were other less conventional forms of retribution. One report stated that:

Vengeance of murdered MDC T supporters has taken its toll as perpetrators of violence have either died mysteriously or lost sanity. In Marondera a top intelligence agent who abducted an MDC T councillor has died a painful and strange death while some militias are allegedly chewing their shoes from madness. In Birchenough, some militias are said to be crying like beasts they

seized from communal farmers and slaughtered for meat at Zanu PF bases... (The Zimbabwean, 4 December 2009:1).

There were more stories of how those who were dispossessed were exacting revenge. Based on some empirical facts, these stories have been used as illustrations in a manual on *Transitional Justice in Zimbabwe* (ACPD and ZHR NGO Forum, 2009). The first story was about hallucinations now being experienced by perpetrators, the second about revenge for confiscation of peanut butter and the third about a pregnant ghost (see the Box below).

Box 10

Hallucinations

D brutalised, maimed and killed innocent people in the run up to the June 2008 run-off election. Victims were forced to denounce their views, to be 'baptised' in the Sanyati river and then they had to give maize and livestock to their attackers.

Soon after the election, people flocked to D's home to reclaim their property. D, his relatives and three of his children involved in the beatings and killings hallucinate daily as they 'see' ghosts clamouring for their blood.

Local community leaders have demanded that D and his family pay back what they looted as well as pay compensation for their wicked acts.

Peanut butter looking for its owner

Near the town of Kadoma, a gang of youths used to block the road for vehicles and confiscate food. A woman from Gokwe North had her peanut butter confiscated by the youth.

A few weeks after the June 2008 election, peanut butter was seen oozing from their noses without stopping. Every traditional healer that they visited told them to search for the woman and return her peanut butter.

The pregnant ghost

In Mashonaland Central province, a pregnant woman was killed in politically motivated violence. When the parents of the deceased went to collect the body from the mortuary, their daughter told the parents not to accept anything as compensation.

The offender offered the family 20 head of cattle, but they refused to accept these. Later the killer, who was a driver, saw a pregnant ghost in the middle of the road. He stopped the car and fainted... Every time he closes his eyes, he sees the pregnant ghost. The politician who ordered him to murder the woman has forgotten him. He is seeking help from a traditional healer...

Source: ACPD and ZHR NGO Forum, 2009:25.

In our own fieldwork in the poor suburb of Epworth on the periphery of Harare, we heard that ‘those who stole rabbits from MDC members see and hear rabbits crying in their houses. They are not at peace. Some of them have become mentally disturbed... (Field Interview with N.F., May, 2010). These stories may sound apocryphal. Yet they have a basis in incidents that actually occurred. Despite an element of embellishment, they present a clear moral message: violence and dispossession are wrong and punishable. The perpetrator who engages in them cannot expect impunity but would be punished. There would be pay-back time and need for ‘cleansing’ by healers, prophets and mediums to appease ‘vengeful spirits’. Because the state has been in complicity with forces that perpetrated violence and dispossession and has rewarded them with impunity, other social forces, in this case the spirits, have taken over and sought restitution sometimes through revenge or causing misfortune to perpetrators. This is a powerful cultural message that has been orally disseminated widely in Zimbabwe in rural and urban communities despite the state’s tight hold through censorship and propaganda.

In concluding this discussion, the findings of a survey that probed into transitional justice are pertinent to this study and actually reinforce some of the points made above (MPOI and Freedom House, 2009).

Table 6: Attitudes towards perpetrators

<i>Uncomfortable</i>	55%
<i>Neutral</i>	6%
<i>Comfortable</i>	11%
<i>No response</i>	28%

Source: MPOI and Freedom House, 2009:52

Table 7: Victim of intimidation, threat or harassment by party

<i>MDC-T</i>	57%
<i>Zanu PF</i>	25%
<i>Other</i>	57%

Source: MPOI and Freedom House, 2009:49

Table 8: Whether respondent has experienced intimidation, threat or harassment

<i>No</i>	37%
<i>Yes</i>	35%
<i>No response</i>	28%

Source: MPOI and Freedom House, 2009:48

First, the survey observed that 55 per cent of the sample was ‘uncomfortable’ with former perpetrators of violence living in the same community. Second, there were clear partisan differences on investigation, prosecution and amnesty issues. For example, MDC supporters preferred to reveal the truth about political crimes than to forget the past (64 per cent to 35 per cent) while ZANU-PF supporters preferred the opposite (by 56 per cent to 42 per cent) (Ibid.). Thirdly, 66 per cent of MDC supporters favoured punishment for perpetrators who confess while 46 per cent of ZANU-PF supporters favoured amnesty over punishment (38 per cent). Fourthly, victims of intimidation or harassment favoured punishment over amnesty by 70 per cent to 24 per cent (Ibid.). Although this survey had a limited sample, its findings have direct relevance to the discourse on what should constitute a process of transitional justice in Zimbabwe.

Youth: the lost generation?

A chapter on the wider effects of violence on society would be incomplete without highlighting albeit briefly the central and special role of youth. As the preceding chapters have shown, throughout all the phases of violence assessed in this study, the youth, male and female, have been the most active practitioners. They have often been the ‘foot-soldiers’ in inter-party and intra-party violence as well as where conflicts have erupted in CSOs. However, it is not youth who conceive or plan the

use of violence in the first instance. While they have featured prominently as stone-throwers, arsonists, petrol-bomb users, torturers and rapists, they have not been the original 'brainchild' of these activities. They have been 'foot-soldiers' recruited by party leaders, state-related institutions and war veterans. As we observed in Chapter 1, tens of thousands of youth were recruited for indoctrination and paramilitary training in camps euphemistically called 'Border Gezi' training camps. Graduates from these camps were trained largely to serve in programmes and campaigns to support ZANU-PF interests especially during elections. Significantly, these youth were also the primary recruiting ground for such state institutions as the army, police and intelligence forces (Interview with S.T., February 2010). The favourite catchment areas for recruitment were rural areas especially small farmer resettlement areas.

This partly explains why youth was prominent in land invasions as well as in the election violence of 2000, 2002 and 2008. After participating in such violence, they graduated into becoming 'war veterans' (Interview with D.A., February 2010). Henceforth they worked closely with state institutions, ZANU-PF structures and war veterans, and this partly explains why the bulk of the militia consists of youth. In parties like the MDC, the youth has been prominent in grassroots mobilization as well as in defensive violence against ZANU-PF youth and state institutions.

The factors behind the youth's prominence in violence relate to a high level of structural employment and very limited opportunities for their personal advancement in fields such as tertiary education and training. Most youth who are recruited or hired into political parties and militia consent primarily for economic reasons. In the last analysis, the 'bottom line' for most of them is not ideology but a secure livelihood in a society with more than 80 per cent unemployment (Interview with N.L., February 2010). The youth population continues to swell thus enlarging the catchment population for parties and state security agencies. The youth are easily 'rented' for promises of jobs and adventure, cash and alcohol, amongst other inducements, particularly during election campaigns.

Box 11

Youth militia in their own words

'We are ZANU-PF's 'B' team. The army is the 'A' team and we do the things the things that the government does not want the 'A' team to do...'

'It was about vandalism.... We were used to do things the State does not want to do themselves. Then they can just say it was just the youths, not us...'
'We got a lot of power. Our source of power was this encouragement we were getting, particularly from the police and others... It was instilled in us that whenever we got out, we are free to do whatever we want and nobody was going to question that...'

Source: Solidarity Peace Trust, 2003:4

If this youth question is not urgently addressed, Zimbabwe could face the prospect of thousands of youth trained in intolerant ideologies and violence turning back on society through widespread alienation, crime and violence. The prospect of a lost generation looms large for Zimbabwean society. There is therefore an imperative need for the rehabilitation and re-integration of this large sector of society.



Conclusion



This study has not been an easy read. It could not be one without devaluing the experiences that thousands of Zimbabwean citizens have experienced particularly during the difficult years of 2000 to 2008. It was the object of the study to portray as vividly as possible the dark violence that accompanied repression by the Mugabe regime during this period. The evidence of authoritarian practices presented in the narrative from Chapters 1 to 5 is damning. It is overwhelming evidence against a sanitized picture of the Mugabe regime as presented in its state media and by its coterie of sympathisers in the region and the African continent. The overall picture that emerges is one of a severely scarred society, traumatized and devastated from successive waves of violence during the past three decades. The study has traced how institutionalised impunity, improved technologies of repression, and material greed combined to render political violence a vicious but preferred instrument of choice for the regime. The study showed that it was particularly during elections that violence reached its peak demonstrating that it had become an indispensable if blunt instrument in the regime's strategy of clinging to power at all cost.

However, the study sought to go beyond presenting a narrative of violence, which has been a means for an authoritarian regime to protect its political hegemony. It has argued that at the heart of violence has lurked a combination of greed, self-aggrandisement and retribution by the ruling elite and its supporters. This was amply orchestrated during land reform in 2000-2003 and subsequent intermittent farm invasions, confiscation of property of opposition supporters and denial of their access to state resources and food aid. The country's political culture could not remain immune to the cancerous cocktail of hate, violence and trauma generated during the period under review. Thus the study sounds a warning that the effects of authoritarian values and practices that underpinned the violence have become deeply embedded in Zimbabweans and so will take many years to detoxify.

Yet it is quite clear from the study that political violence has deep roots in Zimbabwean society. It was shown that the society has endured more than half

a century of political violence after decades of colonial state rule which were not benevolent. Attempts at constructing a moderate and inclusive African nationalism foundered in the late 1950s giving way to a more virulent variety that placed a premium on muscular violent methods of mobilization. As the study observed, this was the major factor behind inter-party violence in the 1960s. The scars and legacy of the bitter violent contest in urban townships and rural areas between ZAPU and ZANU in 1963-64 were unfortunately ingrained into Zimbabwean political culture and psyche.

Chapter 1 strongly argued that the massive violence unleashed during the liberation struggle between 1966 and 1979 by both colonial regime forces and liberation armies as well as by various militia was often brutal and savage. Some 30 to 40 years later, the Zimbabwean society, especially rural society, has not yet sufficiently recovered from its physical, psychological and economic impact. This explains the quiescence of rural society, but especially residual fear and angst about a possible return of the war, or *hondo*. This is fear and trauma that the Mugabe regime actively stokes during each election contest. The study observed that some analysts rue the fact that a golden and strategic opportunity was missed in 1980 to address the legacies of the liberation war and inter-party violence of the 1960s. Consequently, there was no accounting for actions of violence and dispossession during these periods; there was no search for the truth of what really happened and there has therefore been no closure on events and suffering during this era for many. In retrospect, blanket immunity for those who perpetrated detentions, torture, killings and dispossession was a large mistake. Missing the moment of taking stock and accounting in 1980 made possible the Gukurahundi pogrom after 1980 and state-related violence from 2000 but also various 'Operations' such as that of Restore Order/*Murambatsvina* which dislocated the lives and economies of almost a million urban residents.

In Chapter 2, the study attempted to provide an analytical assessment of the material interests of the forces that orchestrated violence. There were concrete material benefits that accrued to those who used violence to acquire farms, agricultural equipment, extort wages from factory owners, and other assets. In a context of growing militarization, the power and influence of the military, police and other security agencies increased in the Zimbabwe state. It was not a coincidence that there was a plethora of authoritarian legislation, especially from 2000, aimed at crippling the opposition. Institutions such as the National Security

Council and Joint Operations Command grew in prominence during this period in which the military and other heads of uniformed services declared that they would not serve under a government formed by the opposition.

The incentives provided by their significant participation in the accumulation process encouraged various state-linked agencies including parts of the military to play an active part in the run-off election in 2008. Chapter 3 assessed the consequences of the direct participation of those agencies and how the run-off election witnessed the most brutal and savage forms of electoral violence whose effects continue to be felt in Zimbabwean society. The epitome of their active engagement in the election process, contrary to the provisions of the constitution, was Operation *Mavotera Papi* (Operation Where did you vote?). This blatantly infringed voters' rights and rigged the outcome of the election which was dismissed by African organizations such as the African Union and the Pan African Parliament.

Chapters 4 and 5 explored the broad effects of violence on political culture and on the wider society respectively. Not only ZANU-PF and its militia as well as certain state agencies have used violence to achieve their objectives, but so have opposition parties and CSOs albeit on a more limited scale. That the latter also believe in the efficacy of violence is a reflection of how Zimbabwe's political culture has been adulterated by the cancer of violence. This adulteration was expressed in counter-violence in self-defence by opposition parties but also in assaults, gang-rapes, forceful mobilizations, methods such as forcing non-party members to chant MDC slogans. Intra-party violence included assaults showing internal bitter power struggles. Similar resorting to violence in the scramble for power positions and other resources had been witnessed in student organizations and churches demonstrating the spread of the virus of violence to civil society. The study observed that wittingly or unwittingly, opposition parties and CSOs were reproducing violence, which ZANU-PF and state-linked agencies had administered to them. Although their violence was administered on a sporadic and relatively limited scale, there remained the danger of their possible 'zanufication' interpreted as inculcating the values of ZANU-PF with respect to violence. This remains a threat to Zimbabwe's political culture.

The upshot of the half a century of violence and authoritarian rule has been widespread fear, trauma and depression making Zimbabweans one of the unhappiest societies on the continent. The legacy of Gukurahundi is painful and a festering sore for those

affected. So is the legacy of election violence of 2000, 2002 and 2008. Chapter 5 explored public opinion in relation to issues of retribution and restitution and took note of demands for prosecution of perpetrators of violence. There is a swelling pressure for transitional justice although there is still no clarity on the best mechanism to achieve it. The period 2009-2010 provides a conjuncture of an uneasy inclusive government consisting of both formerly ruling ZANU-PF and erstwhile opposition MDC; this government has to date been indecisive as well as ambivalent on violence and transitional justice.



In the light of the findings of this study, what then do we consider to be priority challenges and opportunities in addressing the scourge of political violence ? In our view , they relate to:

- improving the knowledge base on incidences and patterns of political violence,
- developing and refining the knowledge base on effects of violence on victims and the wider society,
- advocacy on violence, transitional justice and civic values as well as on the security sector reform, and
- creating pre-conditions for credible and sustainable transitional justice, and reconciliation.

While there exists an impressive data-base on violence and human violations, there remains the challenge of an in-depth analysis of that material to establish links and patterns in violence. There needs to be developed capacity to analyze the material for the multiple purposes of seeking justice and restitution, for advocacy and wider dissemination, and for use in clinical work and surveys. The statistics on violence should be interpreted and woven into more powerful messages against impunity and authoritarian culture. Research and information should be more effectively used as applied knowledge that contributes to the rehabilitation of victims of violence. The data-base should be accessible to interested stakeholders such as counselling units, rehabilitation centres, medical units, research units, human rights, advocacy and welfare groups.

Knowledge, analysis and lessons from the data and research base should be utilised in pragmatic ways. Not only should it be used for academic and legal purposes, but it should be drawn upon to improve health and psychological conditions of victims and also in advocacy for transitional justice. The knowledge and research base should contribute to shaping the debate on transitional justice and be drawn upon in developing an appropriate mechanism for the process. It needs to be emphasized that the transition justice process should be credible, sustainable and comprehensive.

There have been excellent reports in trends in violence and an impressive database built over the decade 1998-2008. What is now imperative is to link the database to imaginative, well-informed and effective campaigns against specific abuses such as torture, *pungwes*, political 'bases' and immunity. Other abuses against which campaigns could be developed are political rape and politically motivated sanctions (such as property confiscation) against opposition supporters. There is a clear opportunity and challenge to transform knowledge into community and popular campaigns on these abuses, to create and raise consciousness, as well as to 'name' and 'shame' those perpetrating them.

However, this needs to be linked to an effective campaign for security sector reform that will cover the army, police and intelligence forces. For instance, some analysts argue for a review of the Police Act and Defence Act to professionalize these forces as well as to require them to be non-partisan in their loyalty and activities.

Finally, the knowledge base and analytical tools should be deployed in creating a project that goes beyond understanding the causes and consequences of violence. Such a project should focus on developing a new paradigm of peace and civic studies as a foundation for a post-conflict Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe needs a ruling elite and leadership rooted in strong values of justice, compassion and public service instead of an elite that boasts of 'degrees in violence'.

Afterword



Almost a year after the research for this publication was completed, the situation in Zimbabwe continues to give serious cause for concern. There has been no decline in political violence. Instead, there has been an upsurge in low-intensity political retribution. This has partly been accentuated by preparations for an election in 2011 with ZANU-PF leading the push for the poll. Holding the reins

of state power, including that deriving from control of the security sector, and the public media, the party sees an advantage in an early poll. This despite national and international counsel that the country is not yet stable, calm and prepared enough to hold another election while the bitter memories of the violence of the 2008 presidential election continue to haunt it. Nothing, it would seem, has been learned from the experience and divisiveness of that election.

Much of the violence in the second half of 2010 and first quarter of 2011 has been concentrated in several urban centres. The rivalry between ZANU-PF and MDC-T is fiercer in such Harare townships as Mbare, Budiro, Epworth and Highfield. There has been no single cause of violence. The clashes have centred on territorial turf: access to local market infrastructure, such as stalls, land for urban agriculture, and location of infrastructure such as party offices. Other triggers have included wearing of party dress, T-shirts, caps and so on. In most clashes, the youth form the major force with their party patrons lurking in the background. Increasingly, the violence has spread to rural areas. The familiar causes and patterns of violence described in the preceding chapters are emerging yet again as the count down to the next election begins.

Yet there exists a major constituency which argues that the country is not ready for an election. For instance, the voters' roll is full of errors, as well as many 'ghost voters'; it therefore needs a thorough overhaul by a neutral or dispassionate body. The Zimbabwe Election Commission does not have the necessary professional staff and material resources to mount an efficient and credible election. The African Union and SADC have advised against an early poll before conditions are suitable for a free and fair election. And the society itself has not yet recovered from the trauma of the violence of 2008, and little has been done

to assist the victims, or the perpetrators who need to understand and take responsibility for the damage they have inflicted.

There is a pattern to the current violence as there has been in the last half century covered by this book. Violence features intimately in ZANU-PF's strategic calculation for acquiring and maintaining power. It is scarcely surprising that intimidation and violence were used during the constitutional reform outreach programme in both rural and urban areas. Intimidation, orchestrated disruptive activities and violence were deployed in the second half of 2010 for just that purpose. An Operation *Chimumumu* (be quiet and don't express views on the constitution) orchestrated by state agencies sought to silence voices, other than those of ZANU-PF, in expressing views on what should be contained in a new constitution. Threats and punitive actions were made against any one with a different opinion. Behind that campaign lay the triangle of state agencies, the militia and war veterans. An extensive rural mobilization campaign for Operation *Chimumumu* was undertaken by the war veteran leader, Jabulani Sibanda. The constitutional reform outreach was handicapped by these threats which can only negatively affect the quality of the proposed new constitution.



It is against this sombre background that there should be scepticism about statements made by political leaders that they would like to stage a peaceful election campaign. Similarly, statements by state security agencies that they will ensure an election campaign that is 'free of violence', should be taken with a pinch of salt. As in the Chinese model, military leaders in Zimbabwe play a double role as soldiers and political commissars. Already charges of partisanship on the part of police,

army and intelligence have been made by no less an authority than Theresa Makone (MDC-T), co-Minister of Home Affairs (see *Newsday*, 17 January 2011). The Government of National Unity has not succeeded in stamping out partisanship; state agencies are allied to ZANU-PF. There has been no reform of the security sector though this is urgently needed. The virtually invisible organ of National

Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) established by the GNU appears to have failed. Beyond some consultative meetings, this bi-partisan Organ appears moribund with little apparent moral authority or purpose and thus little national credibility.

Yet the clamour for truth and justice, and the need for restitution and reconciliation continue to increase in Zimbabwean society. There is a strong yearning to recover from violence and trauma. The depth of that violence was conveyed in research findings on politically motivated rape in the second half of 2010 (RAU, 2010). Observing that this has occurred over the previous ten years, it concluded that politically motivated rape has had serious social, medical and psychological impact on survivors. In addition, there has been a more sophisticated use of tortures against political opponents. In order to minimise the visibility of beatings and injuries, which can be graphically conveyed in images, there has been increased resort to methods that cause maximum damage such as *falanga* and beatings aimed at sensitive body parts like kidneys.

Despite national and international protest, impunity is still widely enjoyed by perpetrators, and this only fuels more violence. Nevertheless, the filing of charges of torture against state agencies at the High Court in Zimbabwe, and at the SADC Tribunal carries a certain important symbolism. Despite current ideology and practice, nobody should be above the law. It is significant that in January 2011, the SADC Tribunal ruled that the Zimbabwe Government should award damages to nine political torture victims (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 14 January 2011). It is against this background that various institutions in Zimbabwe look towards the next election with foreboding. One of the churches that provides succour to victims of violence has warned that:

the evolving trends in our country are worrying and if not corrected, can lead to loss of our nationhood, the disintegration of our society and to the forming of degenerate militias with opposing loyalties... (ZCBC, 14.01.2011:3).

Indeed, the cycle of violence continues to turn. Violence begets violence. ZANU-PF youth violence has provoked MDC violence, which has given rise to yet more violence. Provocative violence from ZANU-PF acts as a trap for the MDC. Even though evidence conclusively reveals that the latter account for a small proportion of the overall violence, it is the party which receives the brunt of repression from state agencies. There is a danger that the cycle of violence will escalate. Political

parties have therefore been counselled to commit themselves to peace and the common good, without which:

we will continue to be dogged by violence, political intolerance, hate language in the public media, injustice, rigging of elections, fear, deception etc. (Ibid. 5).

The general election in 2000 and the presidential elections in 2002 and 2008 were marred by violence, political intolerance, fear and deception. It appears that if the present ominous trends continue the next election will be a repeat of the same. No lessons appear to have been learned about the immediate and far-reaching effects of terror and violence. No wider comparative lessons appear to have been absorbed regarding the history of authoritarianism and the resistance that it must eventually provoke. Yet a legacy of violence and rigged elections, the price of hanging onto power, is now indelibly associated with ZANU-PF and its leadership. Hegemony does not rest on force alone. Hegemony based on violence, trauma and fear is fragile and dangerous. Despite different historical and cultural trajectories, the events in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 brought this home to authoritarian regimes in those countries.

Large-scale migration has been one of the principal effects of the violence and political culture examined in this book. It has been an exodus in which the skilled middle and working classes, and the youth have voted with their feet. Migration of about 25 per cent of the population cannot simply be explained in terms of the search for greener economic pastures. Escape from authoritarianism, violence, trauma and fear is a large factor behind the exodus. Zimbabwe has been denuded of considerable human capital, a potential source of pressure for change. Ironically, migration has provided a safety valve for the system as well as a source of remittances to cushion livelihoods, without challenging the authoritarian core that lies at its base.

However, the country cannot afford another 'lost decade'. It needs transformation. But this will require coming to terms with the severe damage done to Zimbabwean society during the past half century of violence, trauma and fear. Zimbabwe should exorcise its demons. Zimbabwe's neighbours hold elections without violence, without death. Why should Zimbabwe's exceptionalism to date be accepted and tolerated? The country needs to turn to a new page. It needs to explore the truth of its past and contemporary history of violence and hate, and strive for justice and reconciliation.



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Appendix 1

A Note on Methodology

The environment for political research has been difficult since the late 1990s as authoritarianism has deepened. Research into institutionalized violence has become even more difficult and sensitive. Some researchers have experienced harassment from the authorities while others have faced detention and even torture at the hands of the militia. For instance, while the fieldwork for this study was being carried out, a researcher studying conditions, including the prevalence of violence in the diamond-mining sector, was detained and hauled before a court. Several months earlier, the authorities refused permission to the UN Rapporteur on Torture to enter the country and hold discussions with a cross-section of society and government representatives. State authorities are clearly uncomfortable about research, discussion and discourse on institutionalised violence.

Despite this difficult environment, the amount of data that has been amassed on human rights violations and political violence in Zimbabwe is impressive and systematic. A number of NGOs have dedicated themselves to gathering information in this field and from published sources on politically related abuses, torture, displacements, detentions, petitions and cases seeking compensation in the courts. For instance, since 2001, one of the NGOs, the ZHR NGO Forum, has produced a monthly report on political violence. Widely circulated and posted on the Internet, this is information culled from a consortium of about 12 NGOs that operate in the human rights and governance sector. In addition, since 2000, there have been regular reports and studies by such organizations as the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Solidarity Peace Trust. More detailed grassroots research and reports have been produced by advocacy and lobbying organizations such as Zimbabwe Peace Project, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Research and Advocacy Unit and by the Zimbabwe Human Rights organization (ZimRights). There is therefore a formidable data base that includes information on institutionalized violence in both urban and rural areas. Some organizations like ZPP operate a grassroots network of reporters on violence. The material from these organizations is fortunately available in the public domain and is extremely valuable in building up a picture and patterns of authoritarian violence.

Other sources of material include opinion surveys such as those carried out by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI). In recent years, MPOI has collaborated with Afrobarometer based at Michigan State University and with Freedom House based in Washington. Their results on attitudes towards political participation and democracy as well as towards transitional justice issues have been useful for this study.

Although it is often presented from a biased or partisan perspective, another source of useful information is the Zimbabwean press. It has become characteristic of the state-owned press to minimize reporting on the incidence of violence especially when ZANU-PF or the militia and war veterans are concerned. But the independent press often carries a great deal of information on human rights abuses, disappearances, killings and torture. In recent months, it has highlighted incidents of extra-judicial restitution raising the discourse on transitional justice to a new level. However, the independent press provides the coverage on violence at considerable risk. Reporters and photographers have been regularly detained and beaten by the authorities for exposing human rights abuses. This study has selectively drawn from press coverage despite the limitations that we are aware of.

The fieldwork for this study was carried out between November 2009 and May 2010. It included interviews with key informants such as expert academics and researchers on violence, peace-building and reconciliation. This was carried out in Harare, Bulawayo, Cape Town and Johannesburg. We took advantage of a regional conference organized by the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) on Electoral Conflicts in Africa in November 2009 in Johannesburg to discuss with participants some common and unique features of political violence.

In March 2010, we also took advantage of a workshop organised in Harare on National Healing and Reconciliation to discuss with those who had experienced institutionalised violence first-hand.

Interviews with selected communities and more key informants were carried out between March and May 2010 in Epworth, a poor suburb on the outskirts of Harare, in the Mutasa district in eastern Zimbabwe and in Bulawayo, the largest city in Matabeleland. Given an environment that required discretion, the selection of communities and key informants could not be random. It was deliberately purposive. About 25 key informants were interviewed in the four centres of Harare, Bulawayo,

Epworth and Mutasa. These informants included a former guerrilla leader, journalists, academics, psychologists, electoral experts, human rights campaigners, student leaders, civic leaders, politicians and labour unionists. Several focus group discussions with an average of five people were held in Bulawayo, Epworth and Mutasa. The information from key informants and focus group discussants was very valuable in supplementing material from other sources. While it does not ensure a comprehensive study, the information and evidence they gave me access to have enhanced the credibility of a difficult study such as this one. A limitation in our field work



was inability to cover Mashonaland Central province. Political violence in that province remained volatile throughout the period of fieldwork, and it was thus dangerous to venture there. However, access to the documentation on the inter party violence compensated to some extent for the lack of physical access.

When a State turns on its Citizens

Institutionalized Violence and Political Culture

Zimbabwean politics and political culture are embedded in a tradition and practice of violence that began more than half a century ago.

Lloyd Sachikonye traces the roots of Zimbabwe's contemporary violence to the actions of the Rhodesian state and armed forces, inter-party rivalry between the major nationalist parties in the 1960s, and violence that occurred during the liberation war in the 1970s. The consequences of Gukurahundi violence and effects of Operation Murambatsvina/Clean Up are also explored. His focus, however, is the period since 2000, which has witnessed state-sponsored violence during the fast-track land reform and elections. Inter-party and intra-party violence is also assessed.

The consequences of this violence run wide and deep. Aside from inflicting trauma and fear on its victims, the impunity enjoyed by its perpetrators has helped to mould a political culture within which personal freedoms and dreams are strangled.

At a broader social level, violence has been responsible - both directly and indirectly - for several millions of Zimbabweans voting with their feet and heading for the diaspora. Such a significant migration cannot simply be explained in terms of the search for greener economic pastures. Escape from authoritarianism, violence, trauma and fear is a large factor behind the exodus.

Sachikonye concludes that any future quest for justice and reconciliation will depend on the country facing up to the truth about the violence and hatred that have infected its past and present.



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